

## **Overview of Service Assurance Statements 2017/18**

### **Background**

All Assistant Directors were asked to complete the annual review and update of their Service Assurance Statements for 2017/18. This process involves the following elements:

- Review of the operation of the Council's system of internal control within their service area
- Assurance that the control environment operated effectively during 2017/18 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 2018/19.

For 2017/18, Service Assurance Statements have been more closely aligned to the council's approved local framework which encompasses the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework, 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government'. This has resulted in some new areas of focus and a change in the categorisation of actions which are now better aligned to the CIPFA/SOLACE seven core principles of good governance.

### **Summary of progress against actions for delivery in 2017/18**

A total of 34 actions to enhance service governance arrangements were identified by Assistant Directors/Strategic Director for delivery in 2017/18.

A number of actions identified for delivery in 2017/18 reflected enhancement activity as a result of the Senior Management Review and Future Council Business Unit Reviews

Action identified for 2017/18	Progress	Service Area
<b>Strategic direction and statutory obligations</b>		
Action carried over from 2016/17: Implement changes in Housing working practices to reflect the legal requirements of the Housing and Planning Act e.g. sale of high value voids, fixed term tenancies etc.	Confirmation has been received that legal requirements in respect of High Value Voids will not be implemented in 2018/19. However no guidance has been received regarding the other legal requirements of the Housing and Planning Act	Housing and Investment
Learning and Development programme for Stevenage Direct Services to be reviewed and strengthened. Internal review of Waste and Fleet Management service to be carried out.	Action carried over to 2018/19 and forms part of the SDS Future Council Business Review. First Phase of the Business Review presented to SLT on 17 April 2018.	Stevenage Direct Services Stevenage Direct Services
Production and implementation of 2017/18 Priority Plan for Stevenage Direct Services		
Review of internal communication systems for Stevenage Direct Services to enhance communication arrangements	Complete. The Environmental Services Change and Action Team have reviewed staff communications and a number of enhancements have been implemented, e.g. monthly newsletter, monthly one to ones and team meetings.	Stevenage Direct Services
Waste and Recycling Scrutiny review to be carried out	This will now be incorporated into the Overview and Scrutiny presentation on the SDS Future Council Business Review	Stevenage Direct Services

Action identified for 2017/18	Progress	Service Area
<p>Review of statutory duties in the Repairs and Voids service to enhance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• communication of legislative changes;</li> <li>• response to customer feedback;</li> <li>• accessibility to Health and Safety policies;</li> <li>• sub-contractor health and safety arrangements;</li> <li>• programming and delivery of projects</li> </ul>	<p>The first phase of the Repairs and Voids improvement programme has been implemented. The revised processes are now being reviewed to inform further improvement for implementation and embedding throughout 2018 to ensure that the new business unit management team have complete and informed ownership and accountability for enhanced service delivery. The review and embedding of enhanced service delivery has been reflected in AGS activity outlined for 2018/19.</p>	Stevenage Direct Services
<p>Enhancements to ensure staff in the Repairs and Voids service can deliver the service's business vision and values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out job evaluation for senior level roles to recruit the correct calibre of staff</li> <li>• Continue negotiations with the Unions and implement revised trade skill levels and roles</li> </ul>		
Service Plan for the Regeneration service to be created to link resources to projects	<p>The Regeneration service Future Council Business Review identified additional staffing resources are required. New staff to be appointed by July 2018.</p>	Regeneration
Resources required to fulfil the Regeneration Programme over 2017/18 to 2020 to be assessed		
Customer Focus Team to provide Customer Feedback training to the Estates Team	Complete. Customer Feedback training provided by the Customer Focus Team.	Finance and Estates
Carry out a review of Financial Regulations to reflect changes required due to Senior Management Review	Action scheduled for 2018/19	Finance and Estates
Current Business Unit Service Plan (Corporate Services and Transformation) to be reviewed and enhanced in light of the recent Senior Management Review	Complete. New Business Plan in place that sets out five year vision and plan for the Corporate Services and Transformation Business Unit	Corporate Services and Transformation
Consideration to be given to creating new Support Service Satisfaction questionnaires for services within Corporate Services and Transformation business unit to inform ongoing improvement	Managers within Corporate Services and Transformation business unit have been asked to consider appropriate metrics to monitor service delivery during 2018/19.	Corporate Services and Transformation
IT Service Plan to be created in 2017/18 for incorporation into Business Unit Service Plan.	Complete. The Shared Service Technology Improvement Plan (agreed by Executive November 2017) is now being implemented. This Improvement Plan is agreed as a live IT service plan which will lead to new strategy development and strategy delivery review	Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology

Action identified for 2017/18	Progress	Service Area
Evolution and development of Service Catalogue to assist Self Service provision to enhance service delivery	Service Catalogue review is included in the Technology Shared Service Improvement Plan. Staff training on ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) was carried out and a SIAS audit in 2018/19 will help to prioritise an ITIL delivery programme for the service which is to be rolled out from September 2018.	Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology
Following review of current arrangements, re-implement the Service Desk IT system		
IT Customer Satisfaction Survey to be reviewed in light of changes to the satisfaction survey collection arrangements	A review of IT Customer Satisfaction will now form part of the Service Governance improvements identified in the Technology Shared Service Improvement Plan.	Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology
Implement recommendations resulting from the SOCITM review of the ICT Shared Service to strengthen ICT arrangements	The implementation of recommendations from the SOCITM review is now included in the Technology Shared Service Improvement Plan	Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology
Produce and publish Corporate Document Retention Guidelines for staff to enhance information management protocols	Complete. Corporate Document Retention Guidelines have been reviewed and updated	Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology
Implement new procedures, as required, to ensure compliance with the new General Data Protection Regulation which becomes effective from May 2018.	An action plan to enhance information management arrangements across the council is being implemented. An Information Officer has been appointed, Information Asset Owners assigned and a Corporate Information Governance Group has been established to embed best practice records management across the council and ensure that customer data is appropriately managed. Action to embed these arrangements is included as an AGS action for 2018/19.	Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology
As part of the housing transformation programme, organisational development learning and support to promote customer focus service delivery to be implemented	Complete. Development, learning and support has been carried out and this will be ongoing to maintain customer focused service delivery	Housing and Investment
Transactional analysis to be carried out to determine resources required to deliver Housing transformation programme and priority areas	This action is complete.	Housing and Investment
Following an independent review of the Council's Housing Stock in relation to compliance (mechanical and electrical), a five year action plan has been established. The Plan requires initial progress in 2017/18.	In progress. Delivery of the action plan is underway in line with the five year plan. Various procurement activities are underway along with preparation of the compliance programmes ahead of the delivery phase. The recruitment of a Compliance Manager post will allow additional resources to be allocated to delivering the action plan.	Housing and Investment

Action identified for 2017/18	Progress	Service Area
Recruit to new Compliance Manager post in light of new compliance activities arising from transfer of services as part of the Senior Management Review	The Compliance Manager post has been advertised twice unsuccessfully. The current job description and the potential to provide a market supplement to be reviewed to attract suitable candidates for this post. In the meantime, agency cover will be provided to manage compliance activity.	Housing and Investment
Carry out a review of job descriptions for roles affected by the change in service provision as a result of Senior Management Review and the housing transformation programme.	Complete. Job descriptions have been reviewed and new posts appointed.	Housing and Investment
<b>Staff Performance and Conduct</b>		
Carry out a review of Waste and Recycling Health and Safety procedures to enhance current arrangements	In progress. A Health and Safety Specialist is currently undertaking a review of health and safety throughout SDS operations. The review is expected to be complete by end of June 2018.	Stevenage Direct Services
Implementation of HR&OD Action Plan to strengthen the skills and capabilities of staff to ensure delivery of the council's FTFC objectives	Complete. Action Plan is in place and progress is being monitored quarterly.	Corporate Services and Transformation
<b>Performance framework</b>		
Expand business unit performance monitoring and management to inform Corporate Services and Transformation Business Unit improvement	Complete. AD Strategic/ Operational Dashboard in place via InPhase. Identification of new performance measures to be introduced in 2018/19 and 2019/20 are captured within the CS&T Business Unit Plan.	Corporate Services and Transformation
Consolidated set of performance measures to be agreed through IT Shared Services Partnership Board	The partnership agreement is currently under review. The review will result in some new service level agreements.	Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology
A review of Street Cleansing performance data collection and performance reporting to be carried out	In progress. An independent external review of Street Scene and Grounds Maintenance is currently being carried out to inform the Future Council Business Unit Review. This review will also inform the development of new performance measures for this area.	Stevenage Direct Services
Enhance Stevenage Direct Service's Operational Risk Registers to reflect strategic and longer term risks	Complete. Operational Risk Registers have been reviewed.	Stevenage Direct Services
A Risk Register for the FTFC Regeneration Programme is in place. In addition an Operational Risk Register to be created for the Regeneration service to highlight business unit risks	Complete. Risks are outlined in the Regeneration Project Risk Register	Regeneration

Action identified for 2017/18	Progress	Service Area
<b>Partnerships</b>		
Review governance arrangements for the new Legal Shared Service when the new service has been established	The Shared Internal Audit Service is currently considering arrangements in place for the Shared Legal Service. Resulting recommendations will be considered and actioned as appropriate.	Shared Legal Service
Membership of IT Partnership Board to be reviewed and aligned to the new council management arrangements and structure	The membership of IT Partnership Board will be further considered once Business Unit Reviews have progressed.	Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology

### **Actions for completion in 2018/19**

A total of 43 actions to enhance service governance arrangements were identified by Assistant Directors for delivery in 2018/19.

A number of new actions identified for delivery in 2018/19 reflect enhancement activity identified through Future Council Business Reviews.

Action identified for 2018/19	Service Area
<b>Principle A – Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law</b>	
Action carried over from 2017/18: Implement changes in Housing working practices to reflect the legal requirements of the Housing and Planning Act, e.g. sale of high value voids, fixed term vacancies, etc.	Housing and Investment
The results of the 'Big Knock' housing survey carried out in November 2017 identified an action to enhance communication with residents regarding Housing Investment activity	Housing and Investment
Improvements in business intelligence to identify service weaknesses and enhance service delivery to form part of the SDS Future Council Business Review	Stevenage Direct Services
Newly appointed Waste Operations Manager to carry out a review of contract management arrangements within the Stevenage Direct Services	Stevenage Direct Services
Procurement process within Stevenage Direct Services to be enhanced to secure contracts for subcontracted work	Stevenage Direct Services
Activity to further embed expected behaviours in Stevenage Direct Services to be carried out in 2018/19	Stevenage Direct Services
SDS Business Review to include enhancement of arrangements for communicating with Stevenage Direct Services staff	Stevenage Direct Services
SDS Business Review to review optimisation of waste collection and a review of Street Cleansing	Stevenage Direct Services

Action identified for 2018/19	Service Area
Carry out a review of Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders to reflect organisational changes	Finance and Estates
<b>Principle B – Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement</b>	
Phase One of the Housing All Under One Roof Programme to review and enhance computer generated documentation aimed at residents	Housing and Investment
SDS Future Council Business Review to include enhancement of customer insight, customer interaction and competing customer demands	Stevenage Direct Services
<b>Principle C – Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits</b>	
SDS Business Review to ensure service provision is sustainable within the resources available and that best value is achieved	Stevenage Direct Services
The Waste and Recycling Scrutiny Review (scheduled for 2017/18) will now be incorporated into the Overview and Security presentation on the SDS Future Council Business Review	Stevenage Direct Services
Service standards and a customer charter are to be developed for SDS with an annual service plan directing the efforts of all service areas.	Stevenage Direct Services
A review of SDS policies to ensure services operate to approved standards, e.g. Missed Bins Policy	Stevenage Direct Services
Inclusive Play Policy to be developed to enhance access to services	Communities and Neighbourhoods
Communities and Neighbourhoods Business Review to consider more sustainable funding options to introduce more permanent and sustainable workforce arrangements and enhance long term service planning	Communities and Neighbourhoods
<b>Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</b>	
Business Review to inform service planning within the Communities and Neighbourhoods Service	Communities and Neighbourhoods
Implement the ITIL delivery programme for the Technology Shared Service	Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology
<b>Principle E – Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it</b>	
Training identified by the Housing and Investment Service training needs analysis carried out in 2017/18 to be implemented in 2018/19	Housing and Investment
Job descriptions for staff in Housing and Investment to be reviewed and updated to reflect changes identified during the Housing and Investment Business Review	Housing and Investment
Ongoing implementation of HR&OD Action Plan to strengthen the skills and capabilities of staff to ensure delivery of the council's FTFC objectives.	Corporate Services and Transformation



Action identified for 2018/19	Service Area
SDS Business Review to ensure regular review of activities, outputs and outcomes takes place to inform future service delivery	Stevenage Direct Services
Benchmarking and collaborative working to be used more extensively to inform SDS service improvements and achieve added value.	Stevenage Direct Services
SDS Business Review to enhance workforce planning	Stevenage Direct Services
Learning and Development programme for SDS to be reviewed and strengthened and forms part of the SDS Business Review	Stevenage Direct Services
Job descriptions for staff in SDS to be reviewed and updated to reflect changes identified during the SDS Future Council Business Review.	Stevenage Direct Services
A Health and Safety Specialist Company are currently undertaking a review of health and safety throughout the Business Unit. The review is expected to be completed by end of June 2018.	Stevenage Direct Services
The review of Street Cleaning performance data collection and performance reporting is carried over from 2017/18. This action now forms part of an independent review of Street Scene and Ground Maintenance which is currently being carried out to inform the Business Review.	Stevenage Direct Services
Job descriptions for Finance and Estates staff to be reviewed and updated to reflect changes identified during the Finance and Estates Business Review	Finance and Estates
Restructure of Finance service to build capacity into the Finance section.	Finance and Estates
Job descriptions for staff in Communities and Neighbourhoods Service to be reviewed and updated to reflect changes identified during the Communities and Neighbourhoods Business Review	Communities and Neighbourhoods
Consultants to be appointed to provide Project Management training to staff in Regeneration	Regeneration
The Regeneration Future Council Business Review has identified additional staffing resources are required to provide sustainable service provision. Anticipated additional staff will be appointed by July 2018.	Regeneration
<b>Principle F – Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</b>	
Action carried over from 2017/18: Following an independent compliance review of the Council's Housing Stock (mechanical and electrical), delivery of a five year action plan is underway. Various procurement activities are in progress, along with preparation of compliance programmes ahead of the delivery phase.	Housing and Investment
Action carried over from 2017/18: A new post of Compliance Manager is required to carry out compliance activity arising from the transfer of services as part of the recent Senior Management Review and to manage delivery of the five year compliance action plan. Recruitment to this post is outstanding due to difficulties to recruit. A review of this role is required to attract suitable candidates.	Housing and Investment
Communities and Neighbourhoods Operational Risk Registers to be updated to reflect Business Review service restructure	Communities and Neighbourhoods

Action identified for 2018/19	Service Area
Membership of IT Partnership Board to be reviewed and aligned to the new council management arrangements and structure	Corporate Projects, Customer Services and Technology
Partnership Risk Register to be produced for the Shared Legal Service Partnership	Shared Legal Service
Shared Legal Service Partnership Agreement to be updated to reflect GDPR requirements	Shared Legal Service
An archivist to be appointed to review documentation dating back to before the transfer to the new shared legal service (i.e. pre August 2017)	Shared Legal Service
<b>Principle G – Implementing good practice in transparency</b>	
CCTV Partnership Governance Review to be carried out and reported to June Joint CCTV Executive meeting. Completion date for governance review expected October 2018	Communities and Neighbourhoods
Monitoring of the new Building Control Shared Service arrangements throughout 2018/19 to check the effectiveness and governance of the new arrangements	Planning and Regulatory Services