

## Overview of Service Assurance Statements

### Background

All Assistant Directors were asked to complete the annual review and update of their Service Assurance Statements for 2020/21. This process involves the following elements:

- Review of the governance arrangements within their service area
- Assurance that governance arrangements operated effectively during 2020/21 in respect of the service areas for which they have responsibility
- Review of actions taken during the year to address any weaknesses identified during last year's review and identification of any further areas for improvement in 2021/22.

### Progress Review of Service Governance Actions 2020/21

Action identified for 2020/21	Progress	Service Area
<b>Principle A – Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law</b>		
Continue to implement the new management system for SDS Operations to provide real time business intelligence in respect of the Operations functions. Links with the new CRM system need to be made live so the full functionality can be realised.	<p>The new system (Collective) went live on 16 March 2020 with the waste and recycling module. Integration with Firmstep went live in October 2020 and missed bins have reduced by an estimated 45% as a direct result. Bins are not having to be replaced as frequently and some charges have been levied.</p> <p>The wider implementation of Collective is currently delayed due to Covid. Investigations are underway as to how the Streets &amp; Grounds module can be implemented given a number of factors, primarily project management resource and GIS.</p> <p>Actions which are not complete have been carried over to 2021/22.</p>	<b>Stevenage Direct Services</b>
Induction process to be carried out for all staff in Housing and Investment when the Housing and Investment Business Unit Review is launched.	<b>In progress.</b> An induction booklet and training record has been produced and will be rolled out for inducting new staff in the Housing and Investment Business Unit. This action has been carried over to 2021/22..	<b>Housing and Investment</b>
Review of Council's pay and reward arrangements to attract and retain staff and consider special arrangements to attract staff for hard to recruit posts.	<b>Complete.</b> An external consultant was engaged and completed this project, benchmarking SBC pay and benefits locally, regionally and nationally. A report was presented to the Head of the Paid Service and SLT and a decision was made that no changes are currently required.	<b>Human Resources and Organisational Development</b>
Data to be added to HouseMark to enhance data analysis, insight and business intelligence	<b>In progress.</b> All Data except the financial information has been collated. Once this is received, the information will be submitted to HouseMark. This action is being carried over to 2021/22.	<b>Housing and Investment</b>

<b>Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement</b>		
The IT Shared Service Board Partnership Agreement to be reviewed and agreed by East Herts District Council	The ICT Shared Service Board Partnership Agreement has been reviewed and is currently awaiting approval. This action is being carried over to 2021/22.	<b>Digital and Transformation</b>
Financial Regulations to be approved by Audit Committee and staff to be informed of changes	<b>Complete.</b> Financial Regulations were approved by Council in July 2020. The Regulations are now on the Council's intranet.	<b>Finance and Estates</b>
Complete the review of supervisory/management roles in Stevenage Direct Service Business Unit to further enhance service delivery	<b>Complete</b> for Operations with all roles in position and previous interim arrangements ceased.  <b>In progress</b> for the Repairs service. Phase one is complete.  <b>Complete.</b> The service review of the Garages and Markets team is complete and the new structure became effective from 1st February 2021.	<b>Stevenage Direct Services</b>
Deliver and embed a new customer service model for the Customer Service Centre, supported by new and enhanced digital processes.	<b>Complete.</b> A new website and digital platform have gone live offering easier navigation, improved accessibility and enhanced digital options for residents.	<b>Digital and Transformation</b>
Update the Council's Communications Strategy, including a review of the Council's branding and corporate identity	<b>Complete.</b> Communications strategy and style guide updated for 2020. Review of sub-brands is currently underway to help provide clarity on the SBC corporate identity.	<b>Communications</b>
Carry out a review of staff engagement	<b>Complete.</b> Regular pulse staff surveys undertaken throughout the pandemic to monitor staff engagement and digital staff	<b>Human Resources</b>
<b>Principle C – Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits</b>		
Service Plans for the Planning and Regulatory Services Business Unit to be reviewed and updated	The Service Plans are being reviewed as per new corporate guidelines. This action is being carried over to 2021/22.	<b>Planning and Regulation</b>
Implementation of the recommendations from the Waste Scrutiny Review	<b>Complete.</b> Recommendations from the Waste Scrutiny review have been implemented.	<b>Stevenage Direct Services</b>
<b>Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</b>		
An inclusive Economy Charter to be produced alongside an action plan to ensure the council drives social value through its activities and those	<b>Complete.</b> The Inclusive Economy Charter was approved at Executive in July 2020. The Co-operative and Inclusive Economy Charter was launched in November 2020 to encourage residents and businesses to work together to help protect Stevenage's economy.	<b>Communities and Neighbourhoods</b>

of other partners working in Stevenage.		
Recommendations from the peer review of Constitutional Services to be implemented	<b>Complete.</b> Peer review has been completed and recommendations have been considered.	<b>Constitutional Services</b>
<b>Principle E – Developing the entity’s capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it</b>		
Recruit to the Head of Estates, Commercial Asset Manager and Surveyor posts in the Estates service to enhance capacity and implement the Corporate Landlord function	<b>Complete.</b> The Head of Estates has been recruited The Head of Estates has also taken management responsibility for Facilities Management and Property Services.	<b>Finance and Estates</b>
Recruit to the vacant roles in Reconciliation and the Paralegal Service as a result to the recent restructure of these services	<b>Complete.</b> The restructure of the Reconciliation Team is complete.	<b>Finance and Estates</b>
Corporate Governance Group to consider the implementation of induction training for Interim Staff	<b>Complete.</b> This has been considered by Corporate Governance Group and agency staff now receive induction training.	<b>Finance and Estates</b>
Update the final two job descriptions in the Planning and Regulatory Services unit	<b>In progress.</b> This is scheduled to be completed by June 2021.	<b>Planning and Regulation</b>
Recruit to vacant ICT posts.	<b>Complete.</b> Relevant posts have now been recruited to.	<b>Digital and Transformation</b>
Implementation and embedding of the SDS Workforce Plan	<b>Superseded.</b> This action has been superseded by the recent Business Unit Reviews.	<b>Stevenage Direct Services</b>
Finalise proposals, implement and embed the service reviews for Housing Repairs and Maintenance and Environmental Performance and Development	<b>Complete.</b> The service review for the Environmental and Commercial Support functions went live in November 2020.  <b>Suspended.</b> The service review for the Policy and Development Team is currently suspended as budget growth would be required for this to be implemented.  <b>Complete.</b> Phase One of the Repairs review is complete.	<b>Stevenage Direct Services</b>
Recruit to the vacant posts which have been created as a result of the Housing and Investment Future Council Business Review	<b>Complete.</b> All posts have been recruited to.	<b>Housing and Investment</b>
Review of job descriptions for all posts within the scope of the second phase of the Stevenage Direct Services Business Unit review	<b>In Progress.</b> First phase of the Operation service is complete. The second phase commenced in October 2020. Review underway of job descriptions, job titles and terms and conditions as required.	<b>Stevenage Direct Services</b>

	<p><b>In Progress.</b> First phase of the repairs service is complete. Second phase commenced late 2020 that will look at remaining posts including job descriptions, job titles and terms and conditions to ensure future service standards are met.</p> <p>This action is being carried over to 2021/22.</p>	
<b>Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</b>		
<p>Business Case which outlines how ongoing GDPR monitoring/information governance is going to be resourced and proposals for a shared service with East Herts to be agreed and implemented.</p>	<p><b>Complete.</b> A Business Case was submitted to East Herts District Council. The proposal to develop a shared service for Information Governance will not be going ahead.</p>	<p><b>Digital and Transformation</b></p>
<p>Complete the review of the Communities and Neighbourhood web pages to ensure that information is still valid and up to date for the launch of the Council's new website</p>	<p><b>Complete.</b> The web pages have been reviewed.</p>	<p><b>Community and Neighbourhoods</b></p>
<p>Shared Legal Service Partnership Risk Register to be produced</p>	<p><b>Complete.</b> A Shared Service Partnership Risk Register has been produced and agreed by the Shared Legal Service Partnership Board.</p>	<p><b>Shared Legal Service</b></p>
<p>Shared Legal Service Partnership Agreement to be updated to reflect GDPR requirements</p>	<p><b>In progress.</b> This action is being carried over to 2021/22.</p>	<p><b>Shared Legal Service</b></p>
<p>Complete the review of documentation dating back to before the transfer to the new Shared Legal service under the advice of the Borough Solicitor and Lead Lawyer for the Shared Legal Service.</p>	<p><b>In progress.</b> This has been delayed due to absence of staff in the office due to Covid-19. Prior to this, work has been carried out to rationalise the files but this work is not yet complete. This action is being carried over to 2021/22.</p>	<p><b>Shared Legal Service</b></p>
<p>Appointment of a Compliance Manager to carry out compliance activity as outlined in the five year Compliance Action Plan</p>	<p><b>Complete.</b> The new Compliance Manager started on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020.</p>	<p><b>Housing and Investment</b></p>
<p>Delivery of the five year Compliance Action Plan, incorporating actions identified following an independent compliance review of Housing Revenue Account properties</p>	<p><b>Closed.</b> This has either been incorporated in the asset management strategy and covered by that action plan or superseded by building safety changes.</p>	<p><b>Housing and Investment</b></p>

Stevenage Direct Service budgets to be reviewed as part of SDS Business Unit Review to ensure they support both long term and short term outcomes	<b>Complete.</b> Service review within the support team will deliver full year savings from April 2021.	<b>Stevenage Direct Services</b>
Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Bribery Policies to be launched and staff made aware.	<b>Complete.</b> The Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Bribery Policies have been approved and are now available on the Council's intranet.	<b>Finance and Estates</b>
Complete the actions identified by the recent SIAS follow-up audit of the Street Cleansing Service	<b>Complete,</b> with the exception of the implementation of Collective which has been delayed due to Covid.	<b>Stevenage Direct Services</b>
Review of Operational Risk Registers to reflect new corporate services structure and reporting arrangements	<b>Complete.</b> Operational risk reporting has been reviewed to reflect new organisational structure.	<b>Various Services</b>
<b>Principle G – Implementing good practice in transparency</b>		
Continued monitoring of the new Shared Home Improvement Agency Function to ensure its effective implementation and medium term financial viability.	<b>Complete.</b> A report went to Executive on 6 <sup>th</sup> October 2020 outlining the improvements which have been made to this service since the SIAS audit. Significant improvement has been made and Executive has agreed to remain a member of the Shared Home Improvement Agency.	<b>Planning and Regulation</b>

### **Actions identified by Service Assurance review for completion in 2021/22**

<b>Action identified for 2021/22</b>	<b>Service Area</b>
<b>Principle A – Behaving with integrity, demonstrating strong commitment to ethical values and respecting the rule of law</b>	
Ensure new Estates staff (when recruited) attend SBC Procurement training.	Finance & Estates
Carry out annual review of the Council's Whistle-Blowing Policy	Finance & Estates
Carry out a review of the Council's approach to complaints in accordance with the new requirements outlined in the new Social Housing White Paper	Housing & Investment
Customer First Training to be provided for new Starters in the Housing and Investment Business Unit and extend offer to Repairs and CSC	Housing & Investment
Financial training to be provided to Housing and Investment staff by the Finance and Estates business unit.	Housing & Investment

Review of Social Housing White Paper to ensure the Council is compliant with the new requirements contained in the new Paper.	Housing & Investment
<b>Principle B: Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement</b>	
Resident and STAR survey to be carried out.	Housing & Investment
Implement changes to the Repairs service to improve communication between teams when carrying out multi-team complex repairs	Stevenage Direct Services
Continue consultation with children and young people to inform significant capital play area improvements	Stevenage Direct Services
Feedback from residents and service data to be used to inform future project work in relation to the Garages Improvement Programme.	Stevenage Direct Services
Review customer feedback arrangements in the Digital and Transformation Business Unit to enhance overall insight of feedback received.	Digital and Transformation
Review of Contract Management training to ensure all staff who are required to monitor contracts are fully aware of Council procedures	Digital and Transformation
Carry out a review of the ICT Contracts Register	Digital and Transformation
Development of new Customer Strategy	Digital and Transformation
Shared Service Agreement between Stevenage Borough Council and East Herts to be finalised	Digital and Transformation
Review the model for customer services and customer complaints delivery.	Digital and Transformation
<b>Principle C – Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits</b>	
New Service Plan to be produced in line with corporate guidelines/template	Communities & Neighbourhoods
Recruitment to vacant posts in the Finance and Estates service areas.	Finance & Estates
Review performance measures in relation to monitoring use of agency staff.	HR & OD
Review and increase resources as required, as business cases move to projects, to meet the demands of the Town Deal.	Regeneration
<b>Principle D: Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of the intended outcomes</b>	
Quarterly Shared Procurement Service meetings with East Herts and Hertsmere to be established.	Finance & Estates
Review of 2022/23 Capital Programme.	Finance & Estates

Complete the review of the Council's Procurement Strategy	Finance & Estates
Housing data to be uploaded to Housemark once the required information from Finance has been received.	Housing & Investment
Review of the HRA Business Plan	Housing & Investment
Resident engagement offer to be reviewed and new arrangements implemented	Housing & Investment
New Service Plan to be produced in line with corporate guidelines/template.	HR&OD
New Service Plan to be produced in line with corporate guidelines/template.	Planning and Regulation
New Service Plan to be produced in line with corporate guidelines/template.	Finance and Estates
New Service Plan to be produced in line with corporate guidelines/template.	Community and Neighbourhoods
New Service Plan to be produced in line with corporate guidelines/template	Stevenage Direct Services
New Service Plan to be produced in line with corporate guidelines/template	Digital and Transformation
New Service Plan to be produced in line with corporate guidelines/template	Housing and Investment
New Service Plan to be produced in line with corporate guidelines/template	Regeneration
New Service Plan to be produced in line with corporate guidelines/template	Housing Development
Implement Trade module of Collective (Waste management information system) .	Stevenage Direct Services
Implement digital solutions for parks bookings, tree management and fly tipping reporting.	Stevenage Direct Services
Implementation of the Collective Streets and Grounds module to be considered. This is partially dependent on delivery of new GIS system.	Stevenage Direct Services
Process improvements in relation to Garages to be carried out in collaboration with the Estates service.	Stevenage Direct Services
<b>Principle E – Developing the entity's capacity, including the capability of its leadership and the individuals within it</b>	
Review of the service workforce plan to fully implement new structure and ensure succession planning .	Constitutional Services

Review job descriptions to ensure they reflect the new Constitutional Services structure	Constitutional Services
Review of training needs for Finance and Estates staff	Finance & Estates
Job descriptions to be reviewed as part of recruitment process	Finance & Estates
Complete the roll out of the new H&I Induction process.	Housing & Investment
Carry out a skills audit,	Housing & Investment
Carry out a review of the revised Housing and Investment structure to review the effectiveness of the recent H&I Business Unit Review.	Housing & Investment
Health and Safety Policy to be recirculated to Housing and Investment staff as a reminder.	Housing & Investment
Produce a workforce plan for the Regeneration Service.	Regeneration
Implementation of Workforce Plan for Stevenage Direct Services	Stevenage Direct Services
Training log to be created to record all training within the service area	Stevenage Direct Services
Service review to be carried out to create an establishment that is more resilient and flexible and less reliant on agency staff and more geared to commercial activity	Stevenage Direct Services
Review of job descriptions for all posts within the scope of the second phase of the Stevenage Direct Services Business Unit review	Stevenage Direct Services
Carry out a review of training across the Digital and Transformation Business Unit	Digital and Transformation
<b>Principle F: Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management</b>	
Complete review of Finance, Facilities and Estates Operational Risk Registers and rescoring to align with new risk scoring.	Finance & Estates
AD Finance and Estates to update the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy.	Finance & Estates
Review of performance measures for 2021/22 reporting	Housing Development
Review of Performance measures for 2021/22 reporting	HR & OD
Staff to undertake annual refresher of GDPR e-learning	HR & OD



GDPR refresher training to be carried out.	Regeneration
Review of Performance measures for 2021/22 reporting	Digital and Transformation
Carry out a review of risk management arrangements for the shared ICT service	Digital and Transformation
Shared Legal Service Partnership Agreement to be updated to reflect GDPR requirements	Shared Legal Service
Complete the review of documentation dating back to before the transfer to the new Shared Legal service under the advice of the Borough Solicitor and Lead Lawyer for the Shared Legal Service.	Shared Legal Service
<b>Principle G – Implementing good practice in transparency</b>	
Update Local Land Assets information on the Council's Data Transparency Code page once the information required to do this is available	Finance & Estates
Ensure the Implementation of the audit recommendations arising from the February 2021 audit of PCI/DSS Compliance:	Finance & Estates/ Digital and Transformation
Salary information provided on the Data Transparency page of the Council's website to be reviewed in line with the requirements of the Data Transparency Code.	HR & OD