



# Annual Governance Statement 2020-21



Good Governance is about how the Council strives to do the right things, in the right way and for the benefit of the residents it serves.

**PLEASE NOTE THAT MUCH OF THE DETAIL ON HOW YOUR COUNCIL OPERATES CAN BE FOUND IN THE LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE THAT SUPPORTS THIS STATEMENT**

**Supported by:**

**Appendix A – Local Code of Corporate Governance**

**Appendix B – Summary of High Corporate - Service Risks**

**Foreword:** Dorset Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards. It needs to ensure that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently, and effectively. The Accounts and Audit Regulations (2015) require the Council to conduct a review, at least once a year, on the effectiveness of its system of internal control and include an Annual Governance Statement reporting on the review with the Statement of Accounts.

Please note that this document is the second Annual Governance Statement for Dorset Council, following its inception on 1 April 2019. The CIPFA/SOLACE Delivering Good Governance publication (2016) defines the various principles of good governance in the public sector and this document sets out seven core principles that underpin the governance framework.

Dorset Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently, and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to decide to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.



**Matt Prosser**  
Chief Executive  
Dorset Council



**Cllr Spencer Flower**  
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## 1. Key Elements of the Council's Governance Framework

- 1.1 In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions. The Governance Framework is comprised of the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the Council is directed, and its activities through which it is accountable to, engages with and leads the community.
- 1.2 The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The process of review and monitoring of governance arrangements across Dorset Council is an ongoing process with updates provided throughout the year to stakeholders. The outputs from this process have also been a primary source of information for the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement (AGS). This Statement explains how the Council has complied with The Code and meets the requirements of Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 regulation 6, in relation to conducting a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and the publication of an annual governance statement.

## 2. Overview of Dorset Councils Governance framework

- 2.1 The sections below provide an overview of the Councils key governance arrangements.

<b>Council, Cabinet and Leader</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide leadership, approve the budget, develop, and set policy</li><li>• Approve the Constitution which sets out how the council operates</li><li>• Agree Council Plan priorities, developed in consultation with residents and stakeholders</li></ul>
<b>Decision making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All decisions made in compliance with law and council constitution</li><li>• All committee meetings are accessible to public, other than for exempt business</li><li>• Decisions are recorded on the council website</li></ul>
<b>Scrutiny and review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Scrutiny Committee structure review council policy and challenge decisions.</li><li>• The Audit and Governance Committee reviews governance and promotes and maintains high standards of conduct by councillors</li></ul>
<b>Risk Management</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A risk management policy and strategy set out a clear approach to management of risks</li><li>• Risk registers identify strategic, operational and project risks</li></ul>

### 3. Leadership

- 3.1 Senior Leadership Team - Head of Paid Service is the Chief Executive and is responsible for all council employees and serving an effective county organisation. Executive Director for Corporate Development is the Council's Section 151 Officer and is responsible for safeguarding the Council's financial position and ensuring value for money. The Corporate Director (Legal and Democratic Services Monitoring Officer) who is responsible for ensuring legality and promoting high standards of conduct in public life. Under Section 18(2) of the Children Act 2004, Local Authorities in England have a duty to appoint a Director of Children's Services. Local Authorities in England are also required to appoint a Director of Adult Services. The Council's Constitution is updated throughout the year and sets out how the Council operates. It states what matters are reserved for decision by the whole Council, the responsibilities of the Cabinet and the matters reserved for collective and individual decision, and the powers delegated to panels, committees, and partners. Decision making powers not reserved for councillors are delegated to chief officers and heads of service. Elected members scrutinise decisions made by the Cabinet, and those delegated to officers, and review services provided by the Council and its partners.
- 3.2 The Council's committee structure as set out in the Constitution was reviewed by Full Council on 18 February 2020 and replaced the four overview and scrutiny committees with two overview committees and two scrutiny committees. The Council's overall policy is represented through the Council Plan which was formally adopted by Full Council on 18 February 2020. The plan developed alongside the budget through consultation with residents and other stakeholders in the county, and which sets out how Dorset Council priorities will be delivered. We understand that effective performance management relies on close monitoring and assessment of a variety of measures from across the Council. These range from the highest-level strategic measures – the council's key performance indicators (KPIs), through to the multitude of lower level metrics and measures which support individual services and teams. Strategic level outcomes associated with measuring the successful delivery of the council plan and oversight of the Council's overall performance. The strategic reporting consists of:

<b>Quarterly reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Progress with the Dorset Council Plan to the Corporate Leadership Team and the Cabinet</li></ul>
<b>Balanced scorecard reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Service performance: monthly to Corporate Leadership Team; monthly to Performance Leadership Group (executive directors and portfolio holders); and quarterly to the Place and Resource Overview Committee and the People and Health Overview Committee</li></ul>
<b>Quarterly risk management and internal audit updates</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Audit and Governance Committee. The Committee has an assurance role on this overarching framework and will refer any areas of high-level concern to the appropriate overview committee.</li></ul>

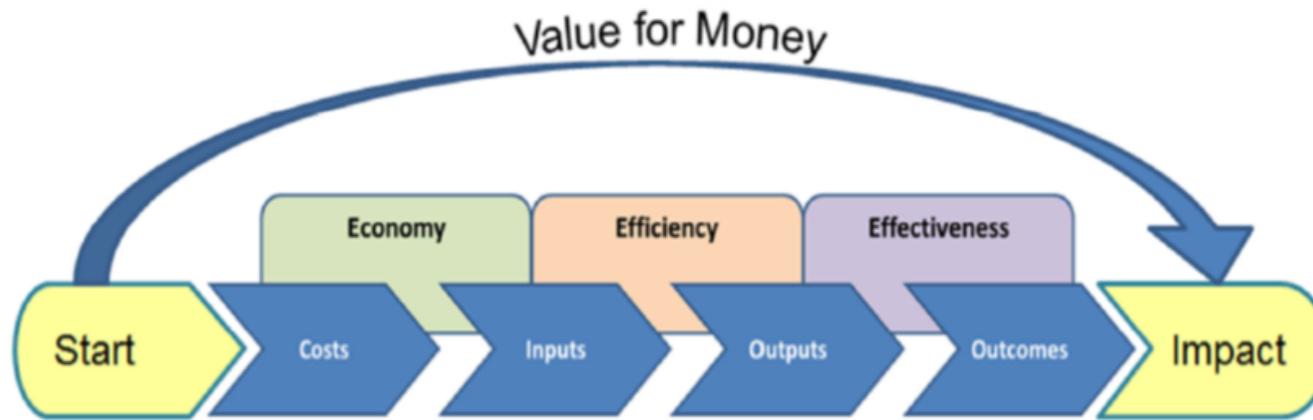
- 3.3 Service level reporting provides monthly management information in a range of formats determined by the senior leadership teams of each of the Council's directorates: People – Adults and Housing; People – Children; Place; and Corporate Development.
- 3.4 To measure our performance, it is important to recognise that we carefully consider, amongst other things: statutory requirements, priorities, resources and how we compare to other places. We continue to strive to be open and transparent, and in line with our efforts to maximise the value in our business intelligence and information. The council provides a performance dashboard using a Power BI application that helps to provide an insight into council activities that build on a data collection database from services that feed into an overall reporting system. Work continues to further develop the performance dashboard and the hope is to link into Power Bi and create a multifunctioning evidence and supporting database.
- 3.5 Statutory performance (including reporting to agencies and partners) need to be returned to central government as part of the statutory reporting process - this type of information is useful for benchmarking against other authorities operating in statistically comparable populations. The framework makes use of a reporting by exception process whereby measures which are identified as off-track require explanation from accountable managers. This will require:
- an explanation of why a target is off-track
  - an action plan identifying how this will be rectified
  - a timeline for returning to within tolerance (path to green)
  - an accountable officer

These actions are tracked through a dedicated action tracking process with regular status updates at subsequent performance meetings. New actions will be identified as part of the performance management meeting and added into the tracking process.

- 3.6 The Council has a whistleblowing policy, which encourages employees and other concerned parties to report any instances of suspected unlawful conduct, financial malpractice, or actions that are dangerous to the public or environment. The Council expects the highest standards of conduct and personal behaviour from councillors and employees. These standards are defined and communicated through codes of conduct, protocols, and other documents.

- 3.7 The Council's financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA "Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government" (2010) as set out in the "Application Note to Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework". The Chief Financial Officer (performed by the Executive Director for Corporate Development) has statutory responsibility for the proper management of the Council's finances and is a key member of the leadership team. The Council's assurance arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA "Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit in Public Service Organisations" (2010).
- 3.8 We recognise that Risk Management is an essential part of delivering good governance and reduces the uncertainty of achieving outcomes as set out in the Council Plan. The Council remains committed to driving the organisation forward to achieve a risk aware culture and in doing so Dorset Council has identified ways to manage risk which enable us to make effective decisions to meet the Council's aspirations and to further safeguard the Council's assets. Effective risk management is essential for a Council to demonstrate that it is acting in the best interests of its residents.
- 3.9 When risks are identified, an agreement takes place on how they will be managed and mitigated and keep the Council's risk profile under review and satisfied that management's systems include appropriate controls, and that it has adequate sources of assurance. It is acknowledged that with such systems in place it will not eliminate all risks, but having systems, mitigations and controls will help to provide a robust process that considers any such risks. The council has appropriate arrangements in place to deal with fraud and corruption risks and is committed to maintaining its vigilance to tackle fraud.
- 3.10 Dorset Council continues to work to better embed and help raise awareness of the principles of risk management and to assist officers, at all levels, in applying sound risk management principles and practices. Work continues to develop the council stance towards risk management to better assist colleagues, at all levels, in applying sound risk management principles and practices. Reports are received by the Audit and Governance Committee on a quarterly basis.
- 3.11 Risk update reports provide a quarterly view on HIGH risks identified across all services, with separate schedules for Adults and Housing, Children's Services, Corporate Services and Place Services. A summary page (Snapshot on Performance) also helps to provide focus on all the services with a series of graphs and headline statements.

- 3.12 The Council continues to develop its value for money framework. With scarce resources, it is recognised to be essential that the council ensures that it secures best value for all its expenditure. Value for money considerations are implicit in a range of routine council activities such as budget setting, budget monitoring and contract management. A value for money framework sets out how to develop value for money service benchmarking across the council. A key piece of work will be the drive to benchmark services across the council to identify strong and weak areas of performance and cost. This will enable a prioritisation exercise to deliver a timeline for fundamental service review.
- 3.13 Local Government bodies, auditors are required to give a conclusion on whether the council has proper arrangements in place to secure value for money and guidance identifies one single criterion for auditors to evaluate:
- 'In all significant respects, the audited body takes properly informed decisions and deploys resources to achieve planned and sustainable outcomes for taxpayers and local people.'
- 3.14 Those risks requiring audit consideration and procedures to address the likelihood that proper arrangements are not in place at the council to deliver value for money. Dorset Council has experienced reductions in grant funding and limited increases in its council tax and business rates precept income in recent years together with pressures surrounding Covid 19 and EU Exit. At the same time, the council has been experiencing cost pressures in relation to the range of services it delivers and uncertainty over future funding. The council is nevertheless obligated, under statute, to set a balanced budget for each financial year and has an internal policy to maintain positive reserves and deliver its efficiency plan. Our view is therefore that delivery of financial plans and future sustainability is a key Value for Money risk. Local government in Dorset has undergone a huge change with the county's nine councils being replaced by two entirely new organisations. This resulted in a reduction in costs by cutting duplication. The money saved is being reinvested into important services for residents including housing, road maintenance, schools, social care, and waste collection. You can find out more about these changes and what it means for you at [Dorset Council](#) External Audit review and report on the Council's financial statements (including the Annual Governance Statement) and provide an opinion on the accounts together with the use of resources including providing a value for money opinion.



#### 4. COVID-19

- 4.1 We are all now painfully aware the Covid-19 is a new strain of the coronavirus that was first identified in Wuhan City, China in December 2019. The virus has spread rapidly prompting the World Health Organization's declaration that this is a pandemic and a public health emergency of international concern. The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted Dorset Council and our residents, requiring us to change the way we deliver services, and driving the creation of new services to meet the needs of Dorset residents. During 2020 Dorset Council had had a significant role in responding to the Covid-19 outbreak, as a Category One responder under the Civil Contingencies Act. This has resulted in some temporary changes to governance arrangements, including postponement of some Committee meetings, and prioritisation of service delivery to cope with changing demand. Dorset Council continues to work with NHS partners to take all the necessary steps to contain and delay the virus to ensure we are well prepared for any potential spread.
- 4.2 The Council shared messages with the workforce and residents as to how they can help minimise the spread of germs and the Coronavirus in Dorset. It is important to note that NHS services and Public Health were prepared for outbreaks of infectious diseases such as COVID-19. Dorset Council was also well prepared. The Council put in place a set of emergency governance measures to monitor and respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, which has very quickly had an extraordinary impact across the Council, our services, residents and communities, these measures are outlined below:

- In line with national Emergency Management protocol, Dorset implemented its Gold –Silver command structure to facilitate clarity on roles and responsibilities and the quick implementation of activities in response to the emergency. This has also given clarity to local, regional, and national stakeholders and counterparts to ensure a joined-up response with others.
- The Council enacted its business continuity processes, identified its essential services, and prioritised the minimum level of resources required to provide them. During 2020-21 the Council participated in a range of exercises to demonstrate how it continues to respond to Covid-19 and the
- delivery of core Council services.
- Within days of lockdown arrangements, the Council was able to ensure that the majority of the workforce were able to work from home, utilising digital tools such as Microsoft Teams, which has been an essential element in our ability to continue to respond quickly, stay in touch with the workforce, and ensure essential meetings could continue with relatively few issues. During this period, all employees and elected members have been able to work from home safely and securely.
- In addition, in line with the business continuity planning arrangements, the Council implemented measures whereby only key or essential workers would need to work from an office or building location. The Council also implemented shielding arrangements for those employees at high risk.
- The Communications service has been fully mobilised to ensure communications through all channels to support public health advice / information and council service and support information to reach audiences externally and internally. The approach helped to quickly identify and understand our resident’s needs, tailoring services to meet these changing needs, whilst ensuring that key issues and challenges are identified and managed.
- Local Resilience Forum Recovery Group is now meeting, chaired by Dorset Council’s Executive Director for Place.

4.3 In-line with the Council’s approach to the management and preparation for the UK’s exit from the EU, Dorset undertook a pro-active approach to ensuring that it continued to manage, coordinate and communicate activity as effectively as possible – working around the specific challenges that Covid-19 presented. The Council recognises that the Covid-19 crisis has had a significant financial impact and will have a long-term effect on the level of resources available to the Council.

4.4 In response to the Covid-19 emergency, the Government announced financial support packages for small businesses, and those in the retail, hospitality, and leisure sectors. The support took the form of two grant funding schemes: The Small Business Grant Fund (SBGF) and the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grant Fund (RHLG). Local authorities were responsible for administering these schemes, and the Government have committed to providing the funding for these payments. As we move forward we will continue to analyse the impact of Covid-19 and understand how the pandemic has impacted our strategic priorities as highlighted within the Council Plan, we will need to understand and manage a variety of impacts, including financial, service delivery, and health and wellbeing.

- 4.5 Workforce arrangements continue to be reviewed on a constant basis, and as guidance is updated, frequent communications and FAQ's are issued. A specific electronic update for members and staff continues to be produced via the Communications Department and Chief Executive on a regular basis. Information and support are provided explaining health messages and activity being carried out to tackle the pandemic and including contact information. This work was done in conjunction with colleagues in the CCG to ensure health and well-being was at the forefront of the communications approach.
- 4.6 Dorset Council have been able to identify and seize the opportunities that arose by embracing new ways of working and delivering services to ensure good governance, decision making and transparency whilst maintaining critical services and supporting our partners across the whole of the public sector community. Notably however, is the impact Covid 19 has had on our local communities including our business and economic community and this forms part of the ongoing works of the Local Resilience Forum Recovery Group. Work continues to mitigate the impact in these areas. The Council remains committed to ensuring adequate resources are provided to address the opportunities, challenges, and issues Covid 19 presents.

## **5. EU Exit**

- 5.1 Following the exit of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU) 31 January 2020, the UK and the EU entered a transition period for the negotiation of the future relationship. This transition period ended on 31 December 2020 and a trade deal was reached. The UK left the EU on 31 January but has benefited from continued membership of the single market and customs union over the last year. The end of the transition period has brought about widespread changes for British businesses and citizens, as a new chapter in the country's relationship with its neighbours begins. The Council operated an EU Exit Group to concentrate on relevant preparations.
- 5.2 Whilst there has been no legal cliff edge in January as most EU rules and laws have or will be converted into UK law, there are other changes for councils including new responsibilities for regulatory services, possible changes in data governance and proposals for new UK migration rules which have a bearing on staff recruitment processes. The Cabinet Office has also taken the opportunity of EU Exit to review EU procurement law and is seeking greater local flexibilities in these processes. In line with Government guidance Dorset Council has provide information about the EU Settlement Scheme for EU citizens living in the area. It has sought to ensure awareness of the Scheme and to signpost EU citizens requiring further information or advice to Citizens Advice Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole who are providing a EUSS support service across both the Dorset Council and BCP council areas, their contract has recently been extended by the Home Office to March 2021.

- 5.3 Regular communications about the EU Settlement Scheme was shared internally for Dorset Council employees, encouraging them to register and use the services of Citizens Advice if necessary. Where appropriate looked after children and care leavers who would need to apply for settled status are supported by Children's Services to do so.
- 5.4 A huge amount of work has been done at national level to ensure a usable legal framework is in place to regulate businesses in respect of the supply of food and consumer goods. Dorset Council's Trading Standards and Environmental Health Officers remain conversant with legal changes to support local business and ensure compliance. A significant additional burden will fall to the Food, Safety and Port Health Team with them needing to issue Fish Export Health Certificates to allow Dorset fish exporters, notably two major ones, to sell every consignment they export to the EU. Officers will also have to initially inspect and register all fishing vessels used to catch fish that goes to other UK distributors that export.
- 5.5 Public Procurement Rules Reforms are being undertaken by the Government Cabinet Office with the aim to establish a new, more simplistic, UK procurement law based on Government Procurement Agreement (GPA) as set by the World Trade Organisation (WTO). It is currently anticipated that any new UK procurement law will not be in place until 2024. The UK public sector remains and will continue to remain under any new UK procurement law, bound by the GPA which opens £1.3 trillion in public procurement opportunities in more than 48 countries to British businesses. It is the intention that the Council will explore any opportunities that arise because of any change to public sector procurement.

## **6. Our Behaviours**

- 6.1 There are [four behaviours](#) that Dorset Council expects every employee to demonstrate. All employees are encouraged to lead by example to encourage and inspire each other through these behaviours. This framework has been designed to aid discussions across Dorset Council, to help all work towards a positive workplace culture. The behaviours we demonstrate, the attitudes we hold and the approaches we take at work are key to the success of Dorset Council and our vision to be an employer of choice. We recognise that our people make our organisation, which is why our behaviours have been developed in partnership with members of our Employee Forum. Behaviours are the attitudes and approaches we bring to our work. They include how we do things; what we say and how we say it; how we treat people; and how we expect to be treated.

## 7. Key Achievements during 2020-21

7.1 The Council continued to carry out significant transformation and restructuring as it began to harmonise the services inherited from the predecessor councils. These achievements included:

5G Rural Dorset	Won a £4.5m grant for 5G Rural Dorset project
Road Safety Weymouth	£1.1m secured in Government funding to improve road safety in Weymouth
Recognised Awards	<p>We won a national award for work to inform residents of the Dorset Council merger</p> <p>Five Dorset parks and green spaces were awarded a Green Flag</p> <p>Won the Digital Skills Award at the Connected Britain Awards</p> <p>The Family Information Service won a national award for their Family Information Directory</p> <p>LGC Awarded both Dorset Council and BCP for works to create two unitary authorities</p> <p>Assets and Property Team won an award for the exterior lighting of Wimborne First School</p> <p>Building Control team received national recognition</p> <p>At the National Visit England Awards colleagues at Durlston Country Park received Gold in the Accessible and Inclusive Tourism category</p>
Homelessness	Received funding from the Government's Next Steps to Accommodation programme to help tackle homelessness in Dorset
Digital Technology	Dorset residents registered for Festival of The Future to learn about the benefits of digital technology
Safer Homes	Signed a five-year contract to deliver innovative care technology services to support and help people stay safely in their homes

<p>COVID Support</p>	<p>Supported residents, businesses, vulnerable people and provided essential services - 250 colleagues were redeployed to help deal with the crisis</p> <p>Shifted committee meetings online to keep the democratic processes running</p> <p>Thousands of pieces of office equipment were delivered to employees at home</p> <p>Delivered food, prescriptions, and PPE</p> <p>Ensured that children and young people travelled to and from school safely and supported families with free school meals</p> <p>Reconditioned more than 250 laptops for children and young people</p> <p>Community Shield work with volunteers helped Dorset Council to respond to thousands of calls and emails, and kept in touch with those who were shielding</p> <p>Successfully launched a click and collect service at our libraries</p> <p>Kept children active through lockdown and organised a Summer in Dorset activity programme</p> <p>Thanks to the launch of the Digital Hotline, volunteers helped more than 550 people get online.'</p> <p>Conducted socially distanced weddings</p> <p>Distributed grants to support local businesses</p> <p>Launched an appeal to give coats and PJs to children who need them</p>
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Independent Living	Opened relocatable housing units in Wareham to help adults with learning difficulties, disabilities and the homeless live independently  Converted the old Sturminster Newton Social Services offices into 18 new independent living flats for adults with learning needs
Road Network	Received a £9.1m from the Department for Transport (DfT) to help improve the condition of Dorset roads
Low Carbon Dorset	Secured an additional £5m to extend the Low Carbon Dorset Programme

## 8. Review of Effectiveness

- 8.1 The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards and that public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and used economically and efficiently. The governance framework comprises the rules, procedures, systems, and processes by which the Council is controlled. The quality of governance arrangements underpins the levels of trust in public services and is fundamental to the Council's statutory and democratic obligations. Good governance allows the council to be clear about how it discharges its responsibilities and to show this for members, partners, and residents. As mentioned above the council has responsibility for conducting, at least annually, a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The system of internal control is a significant part of the framework and is designed to ensure risks are managed within the Council's appetite. We cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies and objectives and can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness.
- 8.2 The effectiveness of the framework is monitored and assured through routine performance monitoring and by internal and external audit. The key elements of the review of effectiveness are:
- The Council's internal management processes, such as performance monitoring and reporting; the employees performance appraisal framework. My ROAD map is the framework in place to support employees and managers to hold good conversations. Objectives can be prepared before each 1-1 to help reflect on achievements and career goals.
  - The Local Code of Corporate Governance Self-Assessment, confirming that the Code of Conduct, Financial Regulations, and other corporate governance processes have operated as intended within services throughout the year

- Corporate, Service and Project Risk Registers which identify significant exposures together with action plans intended to bring the level of risk down to an acceptable level. The work of the audit and governance committee which includes responsibility for monitoring the development and operation of corporate governance in the council
- Quarterly Audit Improvement monitoring reports, Annual Internal Audit Reports and External Audit (ISA260), reviews by external inspection regimes (such as Ofsted and optional peer challenges). The Internal Annual Audit Opinion for 2020-21 identified two significant risks (virtual school; Home to school transport). It is noted that the significant risks are believed to have been mitigated but some further actions remain outstanding.



## **9 What actions have been taken in response to 2019-20 Annual Governance Statement**

- 9.1 The mandatory e-learning module for General Data Protection Regulations has been redeveloped and further promoted. Completion rates are now subject to a reporting KPI. Completion rates remain low and further work is underway to resolve this. A further action is reflected within the 2020-21 action plan.
- 9.2 The finance team have progressed work on developing a Corporate Criminal Offence policy. Ownership has passed to the Service Manger for Assurance to embed as part of the wider framework of fraud related policies and training. The whistleblowing policy has been subject to wider promotion but a further action is reflected within the 2020-21 action plan to address internal audit findings from March 21.
- 9.3 2019-20 has seen significant improvements made to the risk management reporting process, including links to the performance framework. Ownership for service risks are clearly defined.
- 9.4 A series debrief sessions continue to be held to capture lessons learnt during the Covid-19 response, both at a Council and Local Resilience Forum level. Regular exercises have been held on specific scenarios to provide assurance over the Council and partners ability to respond.
- 9.5 The Peer Review implementation plan is actively monitored.

## **10 What actions will be taken in response to this 2020-21 Annual Governance Statement**

- 10.1 Specific opportunities for improvement in governance and internal controls identified as part of the assurance processes have been addressed or are included in action plans for the relevant managers. Focus will be placed on the following issues during 2020-21 as we continue the journey following the transition into Dorset Council.
- 10.2 A March 21 internal audit on Fraud and Whistleblowing has identified Priority 2 actions. These will be addressed by the Fraud task and finish group, with a focus on training.
- **Action** – Service Manager for Assurance.

10.3 The format of future committee meetings will be subject to further discussion, once there is clarification on legislation post May 21.

- **Action** – Service Manager for Electoral and Democratic Services.

10.4 Dorset Operations Group to manage and focus on Summer planning.

- **Action** – Covid Silver

10.5 Compliance with mandatory data protection training remains low (circa 40%). The training module has been improved and further communication and monitoring established, including a KPI on compliance.

- **Action** – Service Manager for Assurance.

10.6 Following local government organisation and transition into Dorset Council, time is right to undertake a thorough assurance mapping exercise.

- **Action** – Service Manager for Assurance

## **11. Approval of the Annual Governance Statement 2020-21**

The Council is satisfied that this statement provides a substantial level of assurance that good governance is in place in Dorset Council and that appropriate arrangements are in place to address improvements in our review of compliance. Progress on these improvements and on addressing any mitigating the risks will be monitored through the year by senior officers and elected councillors of Dorset Council.

**Supported by:**

**Appendix A – Local Code of Corporate Governance**

**Appendix B – Summary of “High” Service Risks**