

Report to: Audit & Governance Committee Meeting  
21 February 2024

Director or Business Manager Lead: Sanjiv Kohli Deputy Chief Executive/Director  
Resources, Section 151 Officer  
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Services, Monitoring Officer

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Report Summary	
<b>Report Title</b>	Review of Significant Issues in the Annual Governance Statement
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To update members of the Audit & Governance Committee on the significant governance issues identified in the Annual Governance Statement.
<b>Recommendations</b>	That the Committee notes the results of the review of significant governance issues as identified in the Annual Governance Statement.
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	<p>To provide assurance for Members that identified issues are being managed appropriately and that any necessary improvements are implemented.</p> <p>To ensure the Council meets its Community Plan objective to be professional and trustworthy by delivering on promises; providing good quality and demonstrating integrity.</p>

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and with proper standards; that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for; and that it is used economically, efficiently and effectively. In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations the Council conducts an annual review of the effectiveness of the system of internal controls and prepares an Annual Governance Statement.
- 1.2 At the meeting of the Audit & Accounts Committee on 14 June 2023, Members approved the draft Annual Governance Statement for the Council for financial year ended 31 March 2023; part of the Council's Statement of Accounts. The AGS has not been amended since that point and is attached to the Audited Statement of Accounts

report on this Committee's agenda for final approval. To ensure that Members can undertake their assurance role, this report updates the Committee on the status of the governance issues identified within the Annual Governance Statement.

1.3 The significant governance issues identified were as follows: -

Issue	Action	Responsible Officer	Completion Date
<b>Change in Council membership</b> During May 2023 local elections were held nationally which saw a change in the Council's membership. As a result a number of new members were elected. Some of these members have not sat on Council previously and hence will need training to assist them.	All members were inducted and met with all Business Unit representatives within the first week of being elected. All members also received a presentation from the Chief Executive detailing the Councils Mandatory and Discretionary responsibilities. Dedicated training for members who sit on regulatory Committees are scheduled but more widely, new members will need training on their responsibilities as Councillors and some of the Council policies (e.g. GDPR)	Assistant Director Legal and Democratic Services	July 2023

2.0 **Proposal/Options Considered**

- 2.1 Following the District Council election on 4 May 2023, an induction and training programme was delivered for all Councillors, between 10 May and 29 June. Details were reported to Audit & Governance Committee on 27 September 2023. This report also included details of further training and development available through the Local Government Association, and all Councillors were made aware of this offer.

- 2.2 The Local Government Association delivered a development session for the Council's leadership in December 2023. This included Portfolio Holders, Chairs and Vice Chairs, with the Officer Senior Leadership Team joining for the second part of the session.
- 2.3 The Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer delivered a session on the Code of Conduct and meeting procedure, on 31 January 2024.
- 2.4 Councillor training and development remains on the work programme for Audit & Governance Committee.

### **3.0 Implications**

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations officers have considered the following implications; Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- The draft Annual Governance Statement is published on page 136 of the Council's draft Statement of Accounts for 2022/3 <https://democracy.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/documents/s16928/Item%207a%2014.06.23%20-%20Unaudited%20Statement%20of%20Accounts%20and%20AGS%20report.pdf>
- Audit & Governance Committee report Councillor Training and Development 27 September 2023 - <https://democracy.newark-sherwooddc.gov.uk/documents/s17784/Item%207%2027.09.2023%20Councillor%20Training%20and%20Development.pdf>
- The final Annual Governance Statement is published on the agenda for this meeting as part of the Council's annual Statement of Accounts.