

Guildhall Gainsborough
Lincolnshire DN21 2NA
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AGENDA

This meeting will be recorded and the video archive published on our website

Governance and Audit Committee

Tuesday, 26th July, 2016 at 6.30 pm

The Council Chamber - The Guildhall, Marshall's Yard, Gainsborough, DN21 2NA

Members:

Councillor Giles McNeill (Chairman)
Councillor Jackie Brockway (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Mrs Angela White
Councillor Sheila Bibb
Councillor David Bond

Alison Adams
Peter Walton
Andrew Morriss

1. **Apologies for Absence**
2. **Public Participation Period**
Up to 15 minutes are allowed for public participation. Participants are restricted to 3 minutes each.
3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (PAGES 1 - 8)
To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 21 June 2016
4. **Members' Declarations of Interest**
Members may make any declarations of interest at this point but may also make them at any point during the meeting.
5. **Matters Arising Schedule** (PAGES 9 - 12)
Matters Arising schedule setting out the current position of previously agreed actions as at Monday 18 July 2016

Agendas, Reports and Minutes will be provided upon request in the following formats:

Large Clear Print: Braille: Audio: Native Language

6. Reports for Consideration

- a) Internal Audit Plan - Monitoring Report - Period 1 (PAGES 13 - 40)
- b) Annual Customer Feedback Report (PAGES 41 - 54)
- c) Summary of Fraud Investigations 2015/16 (PAGES 55 - 60)
- d) Review of the Whistle-blowing Policy (PAGES 61 - 64)
- e) Annual Governance Statement 2015/16 and Action Plan (PAGES 65 - 98)
- f) Work Plan (PAGES 99 - 100)

7. Exclusion of Public and Press

To resolve that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

8. Exempt Reports

- a) Quickline Business Plan / Payments - Monitoring Report

M Gill
Chief Executive
The Guildhall
Gainsborough

Monday, 18 July 2016

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of a Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held in the Council Chamber at the Guildhall, Gainsborough on Tuesday 21 June 2016, commencing at 6.30 pm.

Present:

Councillor Giles McNeill (Chairman)
Councillor Jackie Brockway (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor John McNeill
Councillor Angela White

Andrew Morriss (Independent Co-opted Member)
Peter Walton (Independent Co-opted Member)
Alison Adams (Independent Co-opted Member)

In Attendance:

Ian Knowles	Director of Resources and S151 Officer
James O'Shaughnessy	Interim Strategic Lead - Transformation
Alan Robinson	Strategic Lead – Democracy and Business Support
Tracey Bircumshaw	Team Manager – Financial Services
Darren Mellors	Team Manager – Business Improvement
Katie Coughlan	Governance and Civic Officer

Also In Attendance :

John Sketchley	Internal Audit, Lincolnshire County Council
Matthew Waller	Internal Audit, Lincolnshire County Council

Apologies:

Councillor Mrs Sheila Bibb
Councillor David Bond

Membership:

Councillor Mick Devine substituting for Councillor David Bond¹

6 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman welcomed all those present to the meeting, and in opening shared with the Committee the very sad news that earlier in the day former Chairman and District Councillor Mrs Irmgard Parrott had passed away in Lincoln County Hospital.

He asked Members and Officers to join him in a minute's silence as a mark of respect to this lovely lady who had served her community outstandingly over the years.

¹ Councillor Mick Devine did not attend.

Following the minute's silence, new Committee Member Councillor John McNeill was formally welcomed and thanks were paid to former Committee Member, Councillor Hugo Marfleet for the work he had undertaken.

7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

8 MINUTES

- (a) Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on 14 April 2016 (GA.01 16/17)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on 14 April 2016 be approved and signed as a correct record.

- (b) Meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on 9 May 2016 (GA.02 16/17)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee held on 9 May 2016 be approved and signed as a correct record.

9 MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at this stage of the meeting.

10 MATTERS ARISING SCHEDULE SETTING OUT CURRENT POSITION OF PREVIOUSLY AGREED ACTIONS AS AT 13 JUNE 2016 (GA.03 16/17)

Members gave consideration to the Matters Arising Schedule which set out the current position of all previously agreed actions as at 13 June 2016.

With regard to the green action entitled "report format" the Chairman outlined discussions had at his last Chairman's Briefing meeting and the intention going forward. This matter would be further discussed at the next Chairman's briefing and Independent Member, Mr Morriss, indicated he welcomed the progress and intended next steps.

Further to the last meeting, an Independent Member sought a position update on Quickline Business Services. In light of the confidential nature of this item, Officers undertook to provide this at the conclusion of the meeting.

RESOLVED that progress on the Matters Arising Schedule as set out in report GA.03 16/17 be received and noted.

11 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT (GA.04 16/17)

The Internal Audit Plan had been approved at the beginning of the 2015/16 financial year. The Committee gave consideration to a report which set out the Head of Internal Audit's opinion on the adequacy of the Council's governance, risk and control environment and the delivery of the Internal Audit Plan for 2015/16.

The purpose of the annual report was to present a summary of the audit work undertaken over the past year. In particular it:-

- Included an opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the governance framework and internal control system and the extent to which the Council relied on it;
- Informed how the plan was discharged and the overall outcomes of the work undertaken;
- Provided a statement on conformance with PSIAS and the results of the internal audit quality assurance and improvement programme (QAIP)
- Drew attention to any issues particularly relevant to the Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

Officers presented the report in detail and in doing so, outlined the key messages contained on page 1 of the annual report. Governance, Risk and Financial Control had all been assessed as Green and performing well, whilst Internal Control had been assessed as Amber, performing adequately. Direction of travel across the areas remained static or had seen a positive direction of travel. It was considered this reflected a significant journey for the Authority since its Red rating on Governance in 2013. It was stressed that an Amber status rating for internal control should not be viewed as a negative position in the current Local Government environment. It was an ever changing position which required flexibility as opposed to over control and thus Amber was a positive position.

Explanation was offered as to how each rating status had been arrived at and the factors which had been taken into consideration into reaching them. Potential areas for inclusion in the AGS, were outlined on page 2 of the report.

Page 5 of the report outlined to Members the scope of work undertaken by Internal Audit, the Audit areas covered and any restrictions or changes made to the plan mid-year. Charts on page 6 outlined to the Committee the comparative position when compared to 2014/15 of both assurance opinions given and the number of internal audit recommendations implemented. To-date, 82% of recommendations due by 30 April 2016 had been implemented, all outstanding recommendations were outlined to the Committee in Appendix 2. A list of all audits undertaken was set out at Appendix 1.

Referring to page 7 of the report, Auditors outlined the reasons as to why some of the indicators had not been achieved. It was noted the way in which work had been

scheduled had been changed and this had been of assistance. It was accepted that further improvements could be achieved and audit would continue to work with Senior Management to help improve the process including: -

- Engagement and agreement of the audit schedule
- Clearance of audit reports through CLT
- Swift escalation of issues affecting progress and delivery eg resources and access to information; and
- Completion of post audit feedback questionnaires

Finally Members were provided with the Quality Assurance Framework for Audit Lincolnshire together with a detailed action plan to demonstrate a drive for continuous improvement within the service. (Appendices 3 and 4)

Debate ensued and in opening, the Chairman commented on the much more pleasing picture when compared to previous recent years. Independent Members commented that based on the way Audit Lincolnshire undertook their work they had assurance that the position could be maintained and challenge would continue to be offered.

Referring to Appendix 4, the continuous improvement plan for the Audit Lincolnshire service, Independent Members enquired as to how they as a Committee sought assurance the plan was being delivered. It was stressed that Audit Lincolnshire was a service provided by the County Council and as such its service improvement plan would be held to account by Managers at the County Council. However, if the Committee were minded, Officers would request that it be submitted in six months time alongside the internal audit plan progress report. The Committee welcomed this suggestion.

In responding to Members' questions, Officers clarified that the implementation of audit actions was tracked by the Committee through the internal audit plan quarterly update reports, in which all implemented and outstanding actions were detailed. It was further clarified that final assurance opinions issued after a service audit were not necessarily based on the total number of recommendations identified but rather the number of high priority recommendations.

Referring to figure 3 on page 5 of the report, at the request of a Member, Officers expanded on the types of activity which fell into the categories listed.

In concluding, the Director of Resources paid thanks to the Interim Strategic Lead for Transformation for the work he and his team had undertaken over the last few years in ensuring audit recommendations were tracked and implemented, commenting on the very differing picture now when compared to two years ago. Every audit undertaken was given a thorough review and consideration by CLT and whilst it was acknowledged this could sometimes result in delays, particularly if an audit had been complex, this change in stance was credited as contributing to the significantly improved performance. It was further noted that where areas received a low assurance opinion, it was now standard practice to invite the Auditors back within a period of six months, demonstrating that issues were tackled quickly. Green ratings

were welcomed but Officers were mindful that processes needed to be cost effective and not limit Officer choice and as such were always under review.

RESOLVED that: -

- (a) the contents of the report be received and noted: and
- (b) the Annual Report be further considered when scrutinising the Annual Governance Statement.

12 REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL AUDIT - REPORT FROM THE STATUTORY OFFICERS (GA.05 16/17)

Consideration was given to a report which reviewed the effectiveness of the internal audit service provided by Audit Lincolnshire.

The 2015/16 review had been undertaken on an evidence based desk top approach, the content of which was detailed within the report.

Performance results and the overall assessment were once again that the Internal Audit function was effective and provided value for money, whilst adding value as an arms length view of the Authority's risks and weaknesses and providing support in addressing the issues.

Members were therefore asked to endorse that the Internal Audit Function was effective.

Members thanked Audit Lincolnshire for the services they provided.

RESOLVED that the report and its conclusion set out in section 5 be accepted.

13 DRAFT MEMBER DEVELOPMENT PLAN (GA.06 16/17)

The Committee gave consideration to a report which set out progress to-date and proposals for the future of Member Development.

In presenting the report it was noted that following the successful Induction programme undertaken post election in 2015, a survey was undertaken in January 2016, asking what sort of training Members would like to see provided, the results of which are attached as Appendix A to the report.

The survey incorporated a list of planning related topics which had been suggested at a workshop held in the latter part of 2015, and these had already been set in the timetable for the year.

The Plan recognised that Councillors live in many different parts of the district and some may live some distance from the Guildhall. Their time may be limited, therefore

a flexible approach to the delivery of learning and development would be adopted wherever possible. This would make use of the different development methods available and meet the needs of all the Council Members.

It was anticipated that on-line development would be available shortly, for both generic and bespoke topics. Participation and completion of courses would be able to be monitored to produce usage statistics.

All training courses were evaluated. The importance of evaluation had been recognised in ensuring that better focussed learning and development opportunities could be provided and help define future development objectives.

Levels of attendance at all training events was collated and this information was shared with group leaders.

It was noted that all training sessions would be open to all elected and lay Members.

Officers urged the Governance and Audit Committee to lead by example and encourage their peers to attend as many training events as possible.

Debate ensued and the Chairman indicated that he too would like to be provided with the level of up-take of on-line training

The Vice-Chairman commented on the recent improvements in the quality of training offered by the Council. It was suggested that the difficult customer / conflict management / assertiveness session should touch on on-line situations also.

Officers confirmed that trainers were evaluated also, and changes made where required.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the proposed Development Plan be endorsed and supported; and
- (b) the progress and implementation of the Plan be reviewed on an annual basis.

14 NARRATIVE STATEMENT AND UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS (GA.07 16/17)

Members received the Statement of Accounts for noting prior to submission to the Auditor on 30 June 2016.

In presenting the report, the Section 151 Officer firstly placed on record his thanks to the Financial Services Team Manager and her Team for the work they had undertaken in completing the Statements. The Accounts had been presented at this stage for information only. There was no longer a requirement for them to receive approval prior to the audit, however Officers considered it best practice to do so. The main statement and cover report had been circulated at the same time as all other committee reports, however the Full Narrative report and Financial Statements

had followed, issued on Friday to Members. It was noted that the overall totals and “bottom line” remained the same. The following headlines were shared with the Committee: -

- The outturn was £798k surplus (page 33) reconciled on page 73.
- Usable reserves increased to £21m from £17.7m in 2014/15
- Pension liability improved from £34.7m to £28.9m (using the assumption as set out on page 86)

With regard to pension liability, as highlighted the previous year, pension liability was calculated annually and did not constitute estimates by the Pension Fund. It was an accounting requirement and on this occasion had produced a welcome reduction in the liability of £5.8m.

The Collection Fund (referred to on page 96) included a provision for Business Rate appeals of £1.3m which gave rise to a deficit of £3.1m on the Business Rate Collection Fund. This would impact on the revenue account in 2017/18.

In responding to a query around process from an Independent Member, it was reiterated that the purpose of the report this evening was to bring to the attention of Members the accounts prior to their submission to the External Auditor, a best practice approach. Members would be provided with the opportunity to question the detail when asked to approve the accounts in the September. Furthermore it was noted that full training would be provided to the Committee in advance of them receiving the Statement of Accounts for approval.

The Committee were reminded of their right to raise any queries with Officers, and were encouraged to do so, in the interim period, and of the right to approach the External Auditor.

The Chairman welcomed the improved pension liability position.

RESOLVED that the report be noted at this stage.

15 DRAFT AGS 15/16 (GA.08 16/17)

Consideration was given to a report which presented the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2015/16 to Members, whose feedback thereon was sought prior to the final version being submitted for approval in July.

The report outlined how the Statement had been developed and the sources of information used in this process. The issues deemed closed from the 14/15 statement were set out in section 5 of the report. Confirmation was sought and received that Members were satisfied that sufficient progress had been made to warrant completion.

The Actions relating to Development and Central Lincolnshire Local Plans Team detailed in 14/15 Statement would be rolled into the 15/16 statement as these areas had not been completed in year.

The proposed issues for inclusion were set out at Section 6 of the report and had been identified through those items listed at 2.1 of the report. Confirmation was sought and received that Members were in agreement with the list of issues at this stage and did not seek amendment to them.

In responding to the Vice-Chairman's comments regarding recent cyber-attacks on other local authorities and the difficulties this created in completing the simplest tasks. Officers gave assurance and confirmed that both the Disaster Recovery Plan and Business Continuity Plan were available to all senior staff in paper versions. Furthermore it was a requirement that they kept a copy of these at home in the event of an emergency.

It was further noted that the Council resolution on 9 May to investigate alternative governance models may be an issue for consideration in the 16/17 AGS.

In light of no suggestions made by the Committee, it was: -

RESOLVED that the report be noted at this stage

92 WORK PLAN (GA.67 15/16)

Members considered their work plan for remaining meetings during the ensuing civic year.

RESOLVED that the work plan as at 13 June 2016 be noted.

The meeting concluded at 7.37 pm.

Chairman

Governance & Audit Committee Matters Arising Schedule

Purpose:

To consider progress on the matters arising from previous Governance & Audit Committee meetings.

Recommendation: That members note progress on the matters arising and request corrective action if necessary.

Matters arising Schedule

Active/Closed	Active				
Meeting	Governance and Audit Committee				
Status	Title	Action Required	Comments	Due Date	Allocated To
Black					
	member training plan review	extract from mins of mtg : - the progress and implementation of the Plan be reviewed on an annual basis.	item added to the f plan for june 17	22/06/16	Katie Coughlan
	future meeting times	extract from mins of mtg 21/6/16 There was also informal discussion regarding the potential and appetite for moving the Committee's future meetings into the daytime. Varying views were shared and the potential venue limitations were outlined. The Chairman undertook to consider this further at his next briefing meeting.	this item has been added to the next chairs brief agenda – Chairman will make an announcement at the conclusion of July's meeting	22/06/16	Katie Coughlan

	internal audit monitoring report - improvement pln	<p>extract from mons of mtg 21/6/16</p> <p>Referring to Appendix 4, the continuous improvement plan for the Audit Lincolnshire service, Independent Members enquired as to how they as a Committee sought assurance the plan was being delivered. It was stressed that Audit Lincolnshire was a service provided by the County Council and as such its service improvement plan would be held to account by Mangers at the County Council. However if the Committee were minded, Officers would request that it be submitted in six months time alongside the internal audit plan progress report. The Committee welcomed this suggestion.</p>	<p>ian please can you discuss with Audit this request . i have added the extra requirement to the forward plan entry alongside the relevant 6month update report kjc 22/6</p> <p>Audit have confirmed their agreement to this.</p>	15/07/16	Ian Knowles
Green					
	member training	<p>extract from minutes of mtg 21/6/16</p> <p>Debate ensued and the Chairman indicated that he too would like to be provided with the level of up-take of on-line training</p> <p>It was suggested that the difficult customer / conflict management / assertiveness session should touch on on-line situations also.</p>	<p>some suggestions and requests made when considering MDev Plan. Dinah please can you build these into your processes. thanks</p>	31/08/16	Dinah Lilley

	<p>report format</p>	<p>extract from mins of mtg 14/4/16 There was a detailed discussion regarding how reports were presented to Committee, with lay Members making a number of suggestions as to how the reports could be more engaging. Officers undertook to take the suggestions away and give these further consideration.</p>	<p>this item will be discussed at Chairs Briefing</p> <p>It was agreed</p> <p>Executive summaries will be included on reports and these should be in total no more than 30 pages for the meeting Duplication will be challenged in reports I will contact the County who I was advised have made strides in this area We will consider the use of hyperlinks to make the process of drilling into the detail easier. Continue to keep this under review and discuss again at our next briefing. Deferred to September briefing in absence of Monitoring Officer</p>	<p>31/08/16</p>	<p>Alan Robinson</p>
<p>Grand Total</p>					

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GA.12 16/17

Governance & Audit Committee

26 July 2016

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Subject: Internal Audit Quarter 1 Progress Report 2016/17

Report by:

Lucy Pledge (Head of Service – Corporate Audit & Risk Management – Lincolnshire County Council)

Contact Officer:

Ian Knowles, Director of Resources
ian.knowles@west-lindsey.gov.uk

Purpose / Summary:

The report gives members an update of progress, by the Audit partner, against the 2016/17 annual programmes agreed by the Audit Committee in March 2016.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1) **Members consider the content of the report and identify any actions required.**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None directly arising from the report

Financial: FIN REF 56/17 None directly arises from the report.

Staffing: None.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

NB: A full impact assessment **HAS TO BE** attached if the report relates to any new or revised policy or revision to service delivery/introduction of new services.

None arising from this report

Risk Assessment: N/A

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities: None arising from this report

Background Papers: No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one to which Rule 14 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

Yes

No

X

Key Decision:

Yes

No

X

Internal Audit Q1 Progress Report 2016/17

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Appendices

Appendix 1 - Assurance Definitions

Appendix 2 - Audits with a Limited or Low Level of Assurance

Appendix 3 - Internal Audit Plan 2016/17

Appendix 4 - Outstanding Recommendations

Contact Details:

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Head of Audit & Risk Management



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Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to:
 - Advise of progress made with the 2016/17 Audit Plan
 - Provide details of the audit work undertaken during the period
 - Provide details of the current position with agreed management actions in respect of previously issued reports
 - Raise any other matters that may be relevant to the West Lindsey Audit Committee role

Key Messages

2. We have been working with management to complete and sign off the final audit reports from the 2015/16 plan. Audits completed since the last progress report include:
 - Key Control Testing on Payroll, Treasury Management, Bank Reconciliation, Creditors and Debtors.
 - Contract Management follow up review
 - Land Property & Estate Management
 - Choice Based Lettings.
3. Work on the 2016/17 plan is detailed below.
 - 15% in progress
 - 20% agreed and scheduled during quarter 2
 - 47% agreed and scheduled during quarters 3 and 4
 - 18% potential audit areas to be agreed and scheduled
4. 2016/17 Audits in progress include:

Audit	Status
Commercial Consultancy review	Draft report stage
Key Policies and Procedures	Fieldwork in progress
Development Management Consultancy review	Draft terms of reference to be agreed by the Corporate Leadership Team.
Transformation review	

	Draft terms of reference to be agreed by the Corporate Leadership Team
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Full details of the progress made against the Plan can be found in Appendix 3.

Internal Audit Work Completed

5. Since the last progress report the following audit work has been completed and a final report issued:

High Assurance	Substantial Assurance	Limited Assurance	Low Assurance
Key Controls – Payroll.	Key Controls – Bank Reconciliation.	Choice Based Lettings.	
Key Controls – Treasury Management.	Key Controls – Creditors.		
	Key Controls – Debtors.		
	Contract Management Follow Up.		
	Land Property & Estate Management.		

Note: The Governance & Audit Committee should note that the assurance expressed is at the time of issue of the report but before the full implementation of the agreed management action plan.

6. There were seven audits with High or Substantial Assurance:

Key Controls Payroll – High Assurance

The Payroll System is a fundamental financial system. We have undertaken an Internal Audit review to give you independent assurance about the effectiveness of key controls and the exposure to risk any control weaknesses may cause.

There are robust systems and processes in place to manage the Payroll system. From our sample tested we found that there are robust controls on system access and separation of duties within the Payroll system.

Payroll data had been accurately input and updated and timesheets and overtime claims are authorised and correctly actioned.

Key Controls Treasury Management – High Assurance

In the current economic climate the management of the Council's cash flow and the safe investment of any surplus funds is a critical activity.

Testing verified that there are effective Treasury Management systems and processes in place. Testing of key controls did not highlight any major issues or risks. Treasury management monitoring processes are well developed and provide assurance that investment decisions are made in compliance with agreed policy.

There is an approved and up to date Treasury Management strategy which is supported by good governance arrangements in place to monitor all investments and returns on investments.

All tested investments have been made in accordance with the approved counter party schedule.

Key Control Bank Reconciliation - Substantial Assurance

We have undertaken an Internal Audit review of the Bank Reconciliation processes to provide independent assurance that bank reconciliation arrangements are in place and that they are being managed and maintained appropriately.

Our review found that systems and processes operating in relation to Bank Reconciliation are adequately managed.

There are detailed working papers retained for each reconciliation and completed reconciliations are reviewed by a senior officer.

There was one area where processes could be strengthened and this was in ensuring reconciliations are regularly completed and reviewed by management.

Key Controls Creditors - Substantial Assurance

Creditors are a fundamental financial system for the Authority. It enables accurate and authorised payments to be correctly made for goods and services within an agreed timescale. We have examined the process to ensure the objectives of the system are met.

We identified that there is restricted system access and user access is periodically reviewed. Authorisation controls are in place and operating with regard to payment processing

We identified two findings from our review including, a lack of segregation of duties when raising and authorising purchase orders. Supporting documentation to verify changes to supplier database is not always retained.

Key Controls Debtors - Substantial Assurance

We have undertaken an Internal Audit review of the Debtors system, to give you independent assurance that there are effective systems in place for prompt accurate raising of debtor invoices and that all income received is correctly accounted for.

We found that there are effective processes and controls to manage the debtor function and minimise the risk of fraud. Areas of good practice identified include the adequate segregation of duties, restricted access to the debtors system and prompt daily raising of debtor invoices.

Aged debt is monitored and reviewed and the appropriate authority is obtained for amounts written-off.

We also found the following areas where controls could be improved including ensuring there is authorisation of debtor invoice amendments / cancellations and that system audit report identifying all invoice amendments and cancellations are regularly produced.

Contract Management Follow up – Substantial Assurance

We carried out an Internal Audit follow up review of Contract Management. A recent Audit completed in June 2015 gave a Major Improvement Needed assurance rating on the systems and controls in place to monitor and manage contracts.

The follow up review aimed to give you independent assurance that effective contract management and monitoring arrangements are now in place to support the effective delivery of contract services.

There has been significant progress made since the last audit review and the Council now has improved awareness and monitoring of its contracts. The Council's contract management system Firefly is now populated with contract details including key support documents and dates. The contract officer maintains an overview of the system and reports to management when contracts are coming to their end or are ready for renewal.

Previous management actions from the last review have all been implemented or are in development.

We found one instance where a procurement exercise for a new ICT system had been started and had been carried out with minimal consultation of in house expertise or Procurement Lincs support. The procurement had to be stopped and reviewed as it could have led to an unsafe outcome.

Land Property & Estate Management – Substantial Assurance

The last internal audit in Assets and Estate Management gave a low level of assurance on the processes and controls in place to manage the Council's Assets.

Our follow up review found that the service has significantly improved since the last review. The introduction of asset software has greatly enhanced the understanding and availability of information on assets. Policies have been completed and there is a clear link between the Council's commercial and corporate plans and the asset sections strategy and policies.

There are governance structures in place and regular performance reporting through the Progress & Delivery process. The Council's portfolio is effectively managed with performance reporting on income and void targets. Actual income and voids for 2015/16 has surpassed the yearly base line target.

Previous audit findings have been implemented or superseded by new processes and policies.

We did identify some areas where progress and success could be undermined and the key issue is staff resource. This was highlighted in the 2014 audit report and the section continues to have a reduced level of resource due to staff leaving.

The Council has recognised this and plans are being developed to address staff resource and the structure of the property service.

Other areas where processes can be strengthened are around ensuring performance targets provide effective management oversight and maintaining focus on the corporate landlord approach.

Audits in Progress / Draft Report

7. The following audits are in progress or at draft report stage:

Traded Services

The purpose of this audit is to provide assurance on the Council's approach to development and management of traded services ventures. Our review focused on the strategy and governance structures in place to approve and monitor new Traded Service Ventures.

We have had the closure meeting and are waiting for the management response.

Incident Management

We have completed a review of Incident Management to provide assurance that ICT incidents are promptly identified, recorded and investigated in accordance with the Councils agreed incident management process, and that sufficient and appropriate actions are taken to ensure the ongoing security of the Councils infrastructure and data.

The review focussed on events that could lead to loss of, or disruption to, the Council's operations, services or functions. Incident management is the process of limiting the potential disruption caused by such an event, followed by a return to business as usual.

We have completed the closure meeting and this report now requires final review and approval from the Corporate Leadership Team.

Commercial Plan Consultancy

This review sought to provide advice to the Council on its Commercial Strategy and its management and governance for delivering commercial projects.

There is no assurance opinion as it is a consultancy and advice piece of work. We plan to follow this review up with a further audit at the end of the financial 2016/17 year which will provide an assurance opinion on progress and delivery.

This review is at the draft report stage.

Key Policies and Procedures

The purpose of the review is to identify the key policies and procedures and provide assurance to the Council that these are up to date and accurate. Also that policy and procedure support effective working and align to corporate plans, aims and objectives.

This review is in progress.

Development Management

The aim of this consultancy review is to provide advice around the effectiveness of policies, culture, performance, plans and governance systems in place to support the successful delivery of a sustainable Development Management Service.

This consultancy review forms part of the Phase 1 of our planned work in this area. Phase 2 will be conducted later in 2016/17 and will focus on providing assurance that implemented actions have supported the required improvements and outcomes for the service.

The draft audit terms of reference are on the Corporate Leadership Team meeting agenda for review and approval.

Transformation – Learning & Partnerships

The Corporate Leadership Team has provided feedback and insight into the key areas to cover for this review. While assurance on the overall Transformation process will continue to be provided from management oversight, performance information and internal reviews this audit will cover the following Transformation areas.

Corporate learning from customer comments, complaints and compliments. Review how the Council understands and uses customer feedback to improve services and culture.

Review partnership arrangements around commissioning and understanding the client / provider role. The review will include the Joint Planning Unit and Choice Based Lettings services.

Further meetings to be arranged to draft and agree the audit terms of reference.

Other Significant Work

8. Other audit work undertaken during the period and planned:
Governance Training Workshop
We will be undertaking a Governance training and awareness Workshop with the Senior Leadership Team during July 2016.

The aim of the workshop is to highlight the importance of good governance and through discussion and reviews of key supporting documents obtain management feedback on how to maintain and improve the governance structure.

Annual Internal Audit Plan 2016/17

We have agreed the 2016/17 West Lindsey Internal Audit plan. This has been shared with the Senior Leadership Team to support wider communication of the plan and to improve awareness and understanding with Team managers

Performance Information

9. Our current performance against targets for 2016/17 is shown below.

Performance Indicator	Annual Target	Profiled Target	Actual
Percentage of plan completed.	100% (revised plan)	15%	8%*
Percentage of key financial systems completed.	100%	0%	0%
Percentage of recommendations agreed.	100%	0%	0%
Percentage of recommendations due implemented.	100% or escalated	100% or escalated	None due
Timescales: Draft report issued within 10 working days of completing audit.	100%	100%	100% 1 of 1
Final report issued within 5 working days of CLT agreement.	100%	100%	None Issued
Period taken to complete audit –within 2 months from fieldwork commencing to the issue of the draft report.	80%	80%	100% 1 of 1
Client Feedback on Audit (average)	Good to excellent	Good to excellent	N/A

* Indicator based on the number of days spent against the total number of days within the plan.

Outstanding Recommendations

10. Each quarter we follow up our audit report recommendations and track the implementation of agreed management action. For the latest report run to the end of June 2016 there were 18 outstanding actions, including 4 High priority actions.

Full details of outstanding recommendations are shown in Appendix 4.

Other Matters of Interest

Grant Thornton Report – Reforging Local Government (Summary findings from the fifth year of financial health and governance reviews at English local authorities) - published December 2015

This report provides some insight from research undertaken by Grant Thornton into the financial resilience of Councils to meet required savings by 2020.

- Their research suggests that:
- the majority of councils will continue to weather the financial storm but to do so will now require difficult decisions to be made about services
- most councils project significant funding gaps over the next three to five years but the lack of detailed plans to address these deficits in the medium-term represents a key risk
- Whitehall needs to go further and faster in allowing localities to drive growth and public service reform including proper fiscal devolution that supports businesses and communities
- local government needs a deeper understanding of its local partners to deliver the transformational changes that are needed and to do more to break down silos
- elected members have an increasingly important role in ensuring good governance is not just about compliance with regulations but also about effective management of change and risk
- Councils need to improve the level of consultation with the public when prioritising services and to make sure that their views help shape council development plans.

The full report can be found at the following link

<http://www.grantthornton.co.uk/insights/reforging-local-government/>

CIPFA.SOLACE: Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (2016 Edition) – publication date April 2016

It is crucial that leaders and chief executives keep their governance arrangements up to date and relevant. To assist them, the Framework defines the principles that should underpin the governance of each local government organisation. It provides a structure to help individual authorities with their approach to governance

To achieve good governance, each local authority should be able to demonstrate that its governance structures comply with the core and sub principles contained in this Framework. It should therefore develop and maintain a local code of governance/governance arrangements reflecting the principles set out. Whatever form of arrangements are in place, authorities should test their governance structures and partnerships against the Framework's principles.

Local authorities are required to prepare a governance statement in order to report publicly on the extent to which they comply with their own code of governance on an annual basis, including how they have monitored and evaluated the effectiveness of

their governance arrangements in the year, and on any planned changes in the coming period. The process of preparing the governance statement should itself add value to the effectiveness of the governance and internal control framework. This edition of the Framework applies to annual governance statements prepared for the financial year 2016/17 onwards.

CIPFA – Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Update April 2016

These standards, which are based on the mandatory elements of the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) International Professional Practices Framework (IPPF), are intended to promote further improvement in the professionalism, quality, consistency and effectiveness of internal audit across the public sector.

The Standards have been revised from 1 April 2016 to incorporate the Mission of Internal Audit and Core Principles for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing.

A complete copy of the standards can be located at the following web address:
<http://www.cipfa.org/policy-and-guidance/standards/public-sector-internal-audit-standards>

Appendix 1 – Assurance Definitions¹

<p>High Assurance</p>	<p>Our critical review or assessment on the activity gives us a high level of confidence on service delivery arrangements, management of risks, and the operation of controls and / or performance.</p> <p>The risk of the activity not achieving its objectives or outcomes is low. Controls have been evaluated as adequate, appropriate and are operating effectively.</p>
<p>Substantial Assurance</p>	<p>Our critical review or assessment on the activity gives us a substantial level of confidence (assurance) on service delivery arrangements, management of risks, and operation of controls and / or performance.</p> <p>There are some improvements needed in the application of controls to manage risks. However, the controls have been evaluated as adequate, appropriate and operating sufficiently so that the risk of the activity not achieving its objectives is medium to low.</p>
<p>Limited Assurance</p>	<p>Our critical review or assessment on the activity gives us a limited level of confidence on service delivery arrangements, management of risks, and operation of controls and / or performance.</p> <p>The controls to manage the key risks were found not always to be operating or are inadequate. Therefore, the controls evaluated are unlikely to give a reasonable level of confidence (assurance) that the risks are being managed effectively. It is unlikely that the activity will achieve its objectives.</p>
<p>Low Assurance</p>	<p>Our critical review or assessment on the activity identified significant concerns on service delivery arrangements, management of risks, and operation of controls and / or performance.</p> <p>There are either gaps in the control framework managing the key risks or the controls have been evaluated as not adequate, appropriate or are not being effectively operated. Therefore the risk of the activity not achieving its objectives is high.</p>

¹ These definitions are used as a means of measuring or judging the results and impact of matters identified in the audit. The assurance opinion is based on information and evidence which came to our attention during the audit. Our work cannot provide absolute assurance that material errors, loss or fraud do not exist.

Appendix 2 – Executive summary of Low and Limited Assurance reports

Choice Based Lettings

Introduction and Scope

We have completed an internal audit review of the Choice Based Lettings scheme at West Lindsey District Council (WLDC). The review concentrated on the WLDC processes for running the scheme and sought to provide assurance on in house processes and systems and on the customer experience of using the system.

In 2012 WLDC joined City of Lincoln, North Kesteven District Councils and Acis Group to form Lincs Home finder. The scheme covers all applications for housing, letting of Council properties and nominations to Registered Social Landlords across the partnership area.

The purpose of the Scheme is to make the process of registering for an affordable home as simple as possible and to give people greater choice in selecting where and in what property type and tenure they wish to live. The Scheme has been designed to be easy to use, provide the highest level of customer service and enable people to make the best choice for their needs from the full range of housing options available to them.

All Partners have signed up to this Scheme and should be committed to working together to deliver high quality housing services. All Partners operate a single Allocations Policy and a single Housing Register. The properties and housing options service should be accessible through the same methods. This means that applicants will be able to submit an application to one Partner and be able to bid for and be considered for properties across the three areas.

Management raised some concerns with this area during the year and requested an audit review, as part of a wider overall review of the Housing Register and the Choice based Lettings process.

The review focussed on the following possible risk areas –

- There are ineffective systems in place for WLDC to monitor and manage the Home Finder Choice Based Lettings Scheme,
- There is insufficient staff capacity and capability to effectively manage the scheme,
- Registered Social Housing Landlords do not all apply the system consistently and correctly.
- Inadequate formal Partnership arrangements in place to ensure WLDC can report and manage issues and risks with the scheme to the partnership board.

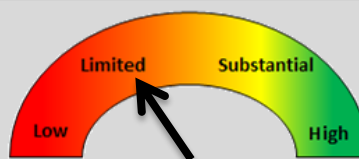
Our audit included a review of formal performance measures, monitoring and governance for the process as well as specific areas where assurance was sought:

1. Decisions are made in line with the agreed Policy
2. The nominations process is working in line with agreed policy and agreements.

Executive Summary

Assurance Opinion

Limited Assurance



The Choice Based Lettings system is currently not providing an effective reliable service for affordable housing for applicants in West Lindsey.

We found there are three main areas which are not working effectively to support the process for applicants. Some of these areas are outside of the Council immediate control as they relate to partnerships and partnership working. There are however actions and improvements that the Council can take to develop management of these.

Working with Acis

Acis own around 95% of the WLDC properties that come up for rent through the Choice Based Lettings system. There are several long running issues in partnership working with Acis including:

- Not complying with the schemes terms and conditions
- Ineffective use of the system for recording applicants details
- Not meeting the 75% target for letting Acis properties through the scheme

The Wider Partnership

The partnership consists of the City of Lincoln, North Kesteven, West Lindsey Councils and Acis. There are detailed Terms of Reference document setting out the role of the partnership, However at the time of the audit;

- The partnership has only met twice in the last twelve months and therefore cannot fulfil its role of providing operational and strategic leadership
- Acis have not attended a meeting for over a year
- The steering group is not structured to support effective partnership working
- Long running IT system issues have not been effectively managed and resolved by the partnership.

Performance at West Lindsey

We found a dedicated knowledgeable team working at WLDC who try to provide an effective service to applicants, within the current partnership arrangements.

The team has expressed frustration in issue resolution and in effect being powerless to address issues. We found the following issues which the Council can address to strengthen the arrangements:

- There has been a lack of formalised performance monitoring within the service which could have supported management overview in addressing issues
- Better assurance could be provided on the accuracy of applicant's claims through an internal process of sample checking cases.

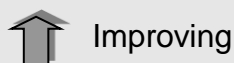
- The contract with the partnership to provide IT systems support requires review and clearer understanding from the Council on what it is paying for and receiving
- There is an agreement to charge Acis for system use but this has not taken place yet. The Council should also consider whether a refund on contract charges could be sought from the provider Civica.

There have been multiple staff changes in the management of this section over the last two years and this has had an effect on the Council being able to address the above issues. Many of the issues are tied into partnership working where the Council cannot on its own resolve ineffective processes for the Choice Based lettings systems.

However the Council could have been more active during this time in reviewing the situation with Acis and the wider partnership. At the time of the audit the Council had already started to take action and was taking steps to resolve issues and provide a more effective process for its applicants.

The attached action plan seeks to support the Council in its wider review of achieving improvements to the scheme, partnership working and outcomes for district applicants.

Direction of Travel



The service working with senior management was taking decisive action to start to address some of the long running issues with the service.

The relationship and working agreements with Acis were being examined with a new positive outlook to addressing issues which are not supporting the process.

The effectiveness of the partnership was also being looked at with a view to improving the outcomes from this group.

There are advantages to working in partnerships with other local authorities and in sharing the costs of running a Choice based Lettings system to assist residents in renting affordable properties. The Council has also been mindful in retaining working relationships with partners and especially with Acis throughout the period of the partnership.

However while maintaining this relationship the actual outcomes and benefits of the partnership have not been realised.

Working with Acis

Acis have not fully complied with the obligations in the agreement both in terms of the partnership and the housing stock transfer agreement. There is a history of non-compliance with completing the processes for housing applicants, for refusing applicants properties when they have successfully registered and bid for them and not achieving the agreed target of letting 75% of their properties through this agreement.

Internal investigations by the section showed that actual figures were 58% for 2014/15 and 54% for 2015/16.

An informal approach to issues resolution has been applied over a number of years but this has not resulted in the changes required by the Council to be able to offer a satisfactory letting service to applicants.

The Wider Partnership

The Home Finder partnership of West Lindsey, Acis, North Kesteven and the City of Lincoln has faltered and has not provided robust strategic leadership to support the effective delivery of outcomes.

Meetings of the group have all but stopped, minute taking and record keeping are sporadic. Acis have not attended for over a year and the group is not structured or lead in a way that would give assurance issues and decisions can be resolved or made.

There is a detailed agreement in place which covers the terms of reference for a steering group and an operational group but this bears no resemblance to the actual workings and attendance of the group.

IT System and Contract Issues

The Partnership agreement contains a generic IT contract with Civica, who provide the IT for the Choice based Lettings system. The lead on this is the City of Lincoln who was already working with Civica when the partnership was started.

It was assumed that West Lindsey were part of a contract agreed by all the partners to run the Home Finder process and use Civica Choice Based Lettings system hosted through the City of Lincoln Council. However once original contract details were requested from City Council it was suggested that there was no contract and only an agreement in place.

This requires further investigation by the Council as if a contract is in place the Council needs to understand the details, timescales and costs involved to ensure understanding and compliance with Contract Procedure Rules.

If there is no contract this may affect any future decisions on continued partnership work and use of Choice Based Lettings systems of which there are several different versions available.

West Lindsey and the other partners have experienced long running issues with the reliability of the current system used. It directly effects applicants when trying to view and bid on properties. It generates manual workarounds for the team and increased unnecessary customer contact due to the unreliability of access to the system.

Again the Council needs to fully understand the implications and costs of continuing with the current provider or making alternative arrangements in relation to whether it is tied in to a contract or not.

The Housing management team were aware of the issues and problems in the service and specifically requested an audit of this area. As a way of supporting the improvement plan and actions they were already taking to address issues. At an early stage of the review the team in combination with senior management started to take decisive steps to address the issues highlighted in this report.

As part of our review we carried out some mystery shopping on the section and we were able to provide positive feedback to management that staff had followed procedures and provided an excellent service to our callers.

We would like to thank the whole team for their time and effort in supporting the review.

Management Response

WLDC Choice Based Lettings 2015/16 Management Response

We welcome the findings of this audit report for a key customer facing area for the Council. The findings have confirmed and increased both the visibility and profile of some of the issues experienced by the service whilst also supporting the development of a coordinated response across the areas for improvement. We are happy to work towards implementing the findings.

The recognition of the knowledge, capability and professionalism of the staff within the service is highlighted during the audit and we regard this as a key benefit to the service. The inclusion of the mystery shopping exercise sought to provide an honest and open insight into the service received by our customers and we welcome the assurance received in this area.

At the time of the audit, the service had already formalised its response to the challenges it had been experiencing in relation to the Choice Based Letting Scheme. The service had requested the audit as a tool to assist with the resolution of some long standing and complex issues.

Prior to the audit, the service had initiated the following:

- Engaged legal services to review LSVT agreement
- Developed strategic relationship with Acis
- Tracking nominations rate

- Acis had attended C&I committee in October 2015 to provide overview of progress and local priorities to members
- Formal requests to software provider around stability and performance issues

The remainder of this management response sets out the work to date and planned work in relation to the key areas identified within the audit. Whilst a number of these are outside of the direct control of the Council, the service has taken the decision to take on a leadership role to ensure solutions are progressed in these key areas.

Working with Acis

Acis have been in existence since the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of the WLDC housing stock in 1999 and the relationship is governed by the original LSVT Agreement. The allocations arrangements have been revised since the original Agreement was put in place, and the Lincs Homefinder Choice Based Lettings Scheme is the overriding allocations policy for both WLDC and Acis.

Effective and meaningful engagement with Acis is taking place at both an operational and strategic level. Supported by case evidence, a partnership improvement plan has been developed which has been mutually agreed and is currently being implemented. The key areas of this plan include training, ensuring contractual and policy compliance, transparency and robust policy application, improved performance and building an improved strategic relationship. It is hoped that an improved strategic relationship with Acis will enable more joint working and provide opportunities for innovation and efficiencies.

Prior to the audit, work had already begun to revise the Council's stock transfer agreement due to legislative changes, service and policy changes, personnel and team structure changes and to ensure that both parties are working to an agreement that is up to date, meaningful and legally compliant. Several schedules within the LSVT agreement are currently under review and will be replaced. Significant additions to the revised document include the CBL allocations scheme, safeguarding requirements and a new section on governance and performance monitoring. There will also be a supplementary document to cover operational arrangements between the partners, which will give more specific detail on responsibilities, timescales and processes, and will be agreed by both partners.

A joint training session was held on 25th February 2016 for Acis and West Lindsey District Council staff, to act as a refresher session around specific IT utilisation and policy issues. This also provided an opportunity to build a positive relationship between operational and strategic staff from both partners. This session was very well received and is already generating more positive engagement between the teams and it is hoped that this will contribute towards improved performance and mutual understanding.

More formal performance monitoring measures and systems between the partners are also to be implemented.

The Wider CBL Partnership

The current CBL service has been in place since 2012 and is delivered through a partnership comprising City of Lincoln, North Kesteven District and West Lindsey

District Councils, along with Acis as WLDC's LSVT partner, with CoL acting as lead partner. The IT function is delivered by Civica, through the CBL partnership, which includes a web-based customer interface, however there have been ongoing system stability and performance issues from implementation.

WLDC are now taking a leading role within the CBL partnership and working towards addressing some of the longstanding issues including the governance arrangements and software problems. A recent system upgrade proposal from the provider is under review by WLDC following concerns around the potential costs and benefits of the work, which forms the first stage of this work.

WLDC will review the existing partnership arrangements, and associated benefits and limitations, and discuss options for the future at a senior level across all partner organisations, with any recommendations for change actioned and implemented through the relevant governance processes both internally and within the partnership.

Performance at West Lindsey

The Council is currently implementing a revised performance and delivery framework which captures both internal assurance and monitoring of external nominations performance. This will feed into the corporate performance monitoring arrangements.

There are recommendations made within the audit report which relate to things outside of the direct control of the Council. We have engaged Legal Services to assist with progressing these actions.

Appendix 3 – Internal Audit Plan & Schedule 2015/16

Audit Area	Assurance	Scope to GCLT	Estimated Start Date	Status	Closure meeting	Agreed by GCLT	Notes
Housing Benefit Subsidy	Test a sample of benefit cases to confirm accuracy of benefits processing and that subsidy claimed for benefits is correct. Work carried out for KPMG to provide the DWP with assurance.	N/A	Jun / July 2016	Await KPMG start date. Resources allocated.			
Combined Assurance	Annual review of identified critical service areas to document and map the three lines of assurance opinion.	N/A		Sept / Oct start			
Commercial Plan Consultancy Pt 1	Consultancy review to provide advice and support on the governance and management structures in place to support the Council's Commercial Plan objectives.	March 2016	April 2016	Draft Report	01.07.2016		In progress
Commercial Plan Pt 2	Audit the systems, processes and delivery of commercial projects.	Dec 2016	Jan 2017	Not due			
Development Management Consultancy Pt 1	Phase 1, consultancy to provide advice and support on the management of improvement plans to support the long term development of the service.	May 2016	June 2016	Terms of Reference awaiting GCLT agreement	Not booked		In progress
Development Management Pt 2	Phase 2, provide assurance that improvements plans and changes have led to better outcomes and a sustainable Development Management service.	Dec2016	Jan 2017	Not due			
Key Policies & Procedures	Up to date policies and procedures	June 2016	June 2016	Fieldwork			In progress

	play a key part in management assurance. We will confirm that key policies are up to date, understood and followed.			in progress			
Progress & Delivery	Provide assurance on the Progress and Delivery reporting process. Reviewing accuracy and relevance of key performance measures used in reporting.	20 TH July	31 st July	Not due			
Growth Programme	Review and provide assurance on the governance and effectiveness of the Council's Growth plans and agenda.	20 th Oct 2016	Nov 2016	Not due			
Risk Management	Provide assurance on the Councils strategic and service level risk management systems.	5 th Sept 16	01 st Oct 16	Not due			
Project & Programme Management	Review the governance and management oversight of key projects to confirm that they are effectively managed to deliver on time, within budget and deliver critical success factors (benefits). We will select a sample of projects to confirm compliance with approved codes of practice.	19 th Sept 2016	31 st Oct 2016	Not due			
Key Control Testing	Review key finance system and test key controls. Coverage to be agreed	Jan 2017	Feb 2017	Not due			
Service Transformation	To review two key areas of business transformation, corporate learning from customer feedback and Partnership arrangements. Understanding commissioning,	June 2016	To be agreed	Developing the terms of reference			

	client and provider roles. Review to include the Joint Planning Unit and Choice Based Lettings Home finder partnership.						
ICT Audit – To be agreed	Areas of coverage to be agreed.	Q4	To be agreed	Not started			
Audit Follow Up Work –Incident Management 2 days	Management request to follow up and ensure recommendations are implemented.	Q4	To be agreed	Not started			
Consultancy & Emerging Risks		To be agreed					

Appendix 4 – Outstanding Recommendations as at 30th June 2016

Activity	Issue Date	Assurance	Total Recs	Recs implemented	Priority of Recommendations o/s		
					High	Medium	Not yet due
Change Programme	Nov 2012	Substantial	11	10		1	
Infrastructure	Aug 2013	Limited	15	14	1		
Mobile Devices	May 2015	Substantial	6	5		1	
Strategic Economic Development	Dec 2014	Substantial	5	4		1	
Housing & Planning Enforcement	Nov 2015	Substantial	5		2	3	
Tablet Security	Feb 2016	Substantial	10	7		3	
Effective Decision Making	Aug 2015	Substantial	7	6		1	
Key Controls Debtors	June 2016	Substantial	4	4			
Grants Given	Feb 2016	Substantial	9	6		3	
Local Land Charges	June 2016	Low	11	8	1	1	1
Contract Management Follow Up	June 2016	Substantial	2	2			
Land, Property & Estates	June 2016	Substantial	6	1			5
Overall Total			91	67	4	14	6

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GA.13 16/17
Governance and Audit Committee
26 July 2016

D

Subject: Annual Customer Feedback report

Report by:

Lyn Marlow

Contact Officer:

Lyn Marlow
Team Manager Customer Strategy and Services
Telephone 01427 676 684
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Purpose / Summary:

To review the number, type and results of Compliments, comment and complaints made to the Council during 2015/16, advise on any trends, areas for learning and future management of feedback

RECOMMENDATION(S): That Members note the 2015/16 results and where appropriate suggest corrective action

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None arising from this report

Financial: FIN/24/17 - In 2014 members requested work be carried out to establish the cost of complaints to the council. This piece of work was carried out and is addressed at point 5.5 of this report.

Staffing : None arising from this report

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

Customers have the ability to make a compliment, comment or complaint in a variety of ways such as face to face, letter, telephone, email or the website. When requested our procedure will be provided in alternative formats such as another language or in braille

Risk Assessment : None arising from this report

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities : None arising from this report

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

The Local Government Ombudsman prepare an annual letter which provides details of LGO complaints received and dealt with.

*Institute of Customer Services “Cost of handling complaints in the public sector 2014”

Details of all compliments, comments and complaints are held on internal software and reports from that system are used to create this report.

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

1. Introduction

1.1 In March 2008 the Corporate Governance Group agreed to submit an annual report to this Committee on customer complaints, referred to internally as feedback. Customers are at the heart of what we do and we need to ensure that our services meet the needs of the customer.

1.2 This report looks at 3 main areas within feedback. These are compliments, comments and complaints. All 3 are of equal importance in understanding what customers think of the services we provide.

1.3 Customers can also ask that their complaint is ultimately reviewed by the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO). The remit of the LGO is to investigate complaints about 'maladministration' and 'service failure'. If there has been fault she considers whether it has caused an injustice and if it has, she may suggest a remedy. (Local Government Act 1974 Sections 26 (1) & 26A (1))

2. Background

2.1 Compliments, Comments and Complaints are recorded by the Customer Services team and are dealt with in accordance with the Council's procedure.

3. Compliments

3.1 The Council received a total of 162 compliments in 2015/16.

3.2 Compliments were received in the following teams;

A. Development Management = 41

B. Customer Services = 37

C. Waste Services = 32

D. Building Control = 12

E. Housing Benefits = 8

F. Environmental Services = 5

G. Council Tax = 4

H. Licensing = 4

I. Home Choices = 3

J. 16 other teams received compliments of 2 or below

3.3 The Council actively encourages customers and staff to log all compliments received as it is vital to understand how customers perceive the services we provide.

3.4 Appendix A shows what the compliments received were about, with the majority of compliments received being about officers

4. Comments

4.1 The Council also captures comments from our customer and these provide essential information in terms of how we can change our services for the better.

4.2 Comments were received in the following areas;

- A. Customer Services = 64**
- B. Waste Services = 19**
- C. Development Management = 11**
- D. IT Services (website) = 13**
- E. Corporate Governance = 9**
- F. Housing Benefits = 6**
- G. Council Tax = 5**
- H. Home Choices = 5**
- I. Building Control = 3**
- J. 7 teams received 2 comment or below**

4.3 The Council received a total of 142 comments in 2015/16 and appendix B shows what these comments were about.

4.4 Appendix C shows some of the actions we took in response to comments – known as “**You said we did**”

5. Complaints for 2015/16

5.1 A total of 136 complaints were received in 2015/16, this is an increase 41 from 2014/15.

5.2 An increase in complaints received presents its own challenges and these are to be welcomed, but it should be noted that the Council deals with over half a million enquiries a year from customers which means that less than **0.02% of customers we deal with make a formal complaint.**

5.3 Of the 136 complaints received – the figure below adds up to 153 and this is because I have also capture decisions made at both stage 2 and 3 even though one complaint

- 50 complaints were upheld in the customers favour
- 96 were not upheld
- 7 complaints are currently still under investigation

5.4 In 2014/15 members requested an understanding of how much dealing with complaints costs the Council. Using the same monetary figures as 2014/15 each complaint costs a minimum of £314.54 to deal with*. Therefore the minimum total figure for dealing with complaints in 2015/16 is £42,777.84.

5.5 Work is to take place during 2016/17 to create an internal financial figure per complaint dealt with

5.5 The council also offered a financial remedy in relation to two complaints totalling £1,000

5.6 Appendices D to I provided at the end of this report shows volumes, types, and response rates of complaints.

**Institute of Customer Services “Cost of handling complaints in the public sector 2014”*

6 Local Government Ombudsman

6.1 There were a total of 3 enquiries to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO), which is the same as 2014/2015.

6.2 Two of these have been investigated and closed and one is still under investigation.

6.3 Regarding the closed cases the LGO found no evidence of fault in one case but did uphold the customer's complaint in the second case and found the Council at fault. In this case the Council have and are continuing to comply with the remedy requested by the LGO. This has not resulted in any financial compensation.

6.4 In addition during 2015/16 we have received 1 LGO request for information and we are still waiting for LGO to advise if a full investigation is to take place.

7. Complaints system

7.1 Following the appointment of the Customer First strategic lead the complaint procedure and process has been reviewed.

7.2 The Customer first strategic lead found that the procedure we have is robust and complies with best practice as required by the LGO but found that there were significant issues in the way the process was implemented across services and recommended that improvements are made.

7.3 A recommendation was that a number of key officers should undertake complaint investigation training as provided by the Local Government Ombudsman.

7.4 This training took place on the 27 of April and the 17 May 2016 and we now have a core team of 30 officers who have been trained to undertake complaint investigations. This training will not stop complaints being received by may result in less escalations

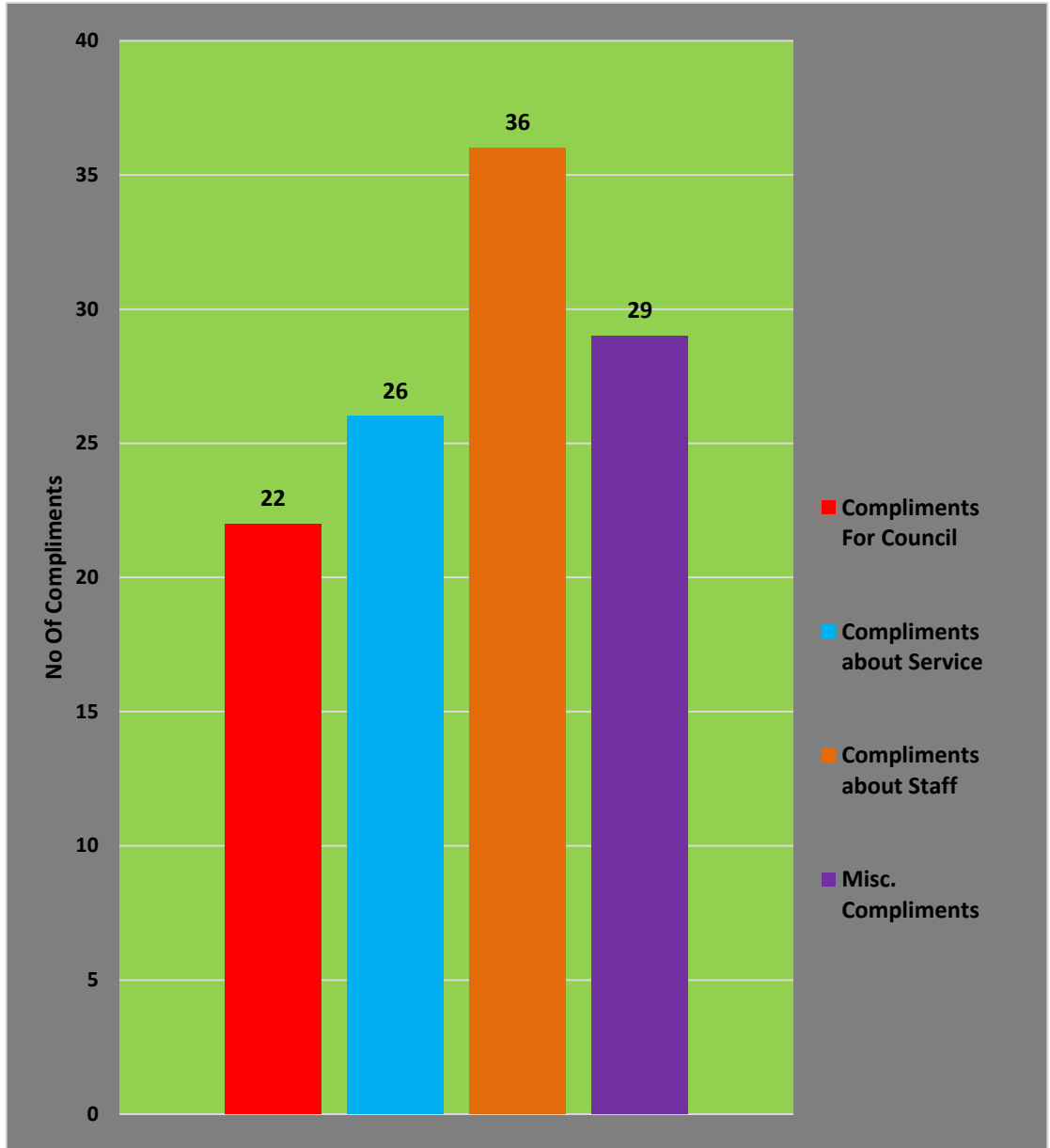
7.5 An e-form has been created for customers to log complaints via the website and work is ongoing to create a more streamline process internally for the logging, monitoring and dealing with of all complaints, including a review of response times.

8. Conclusion

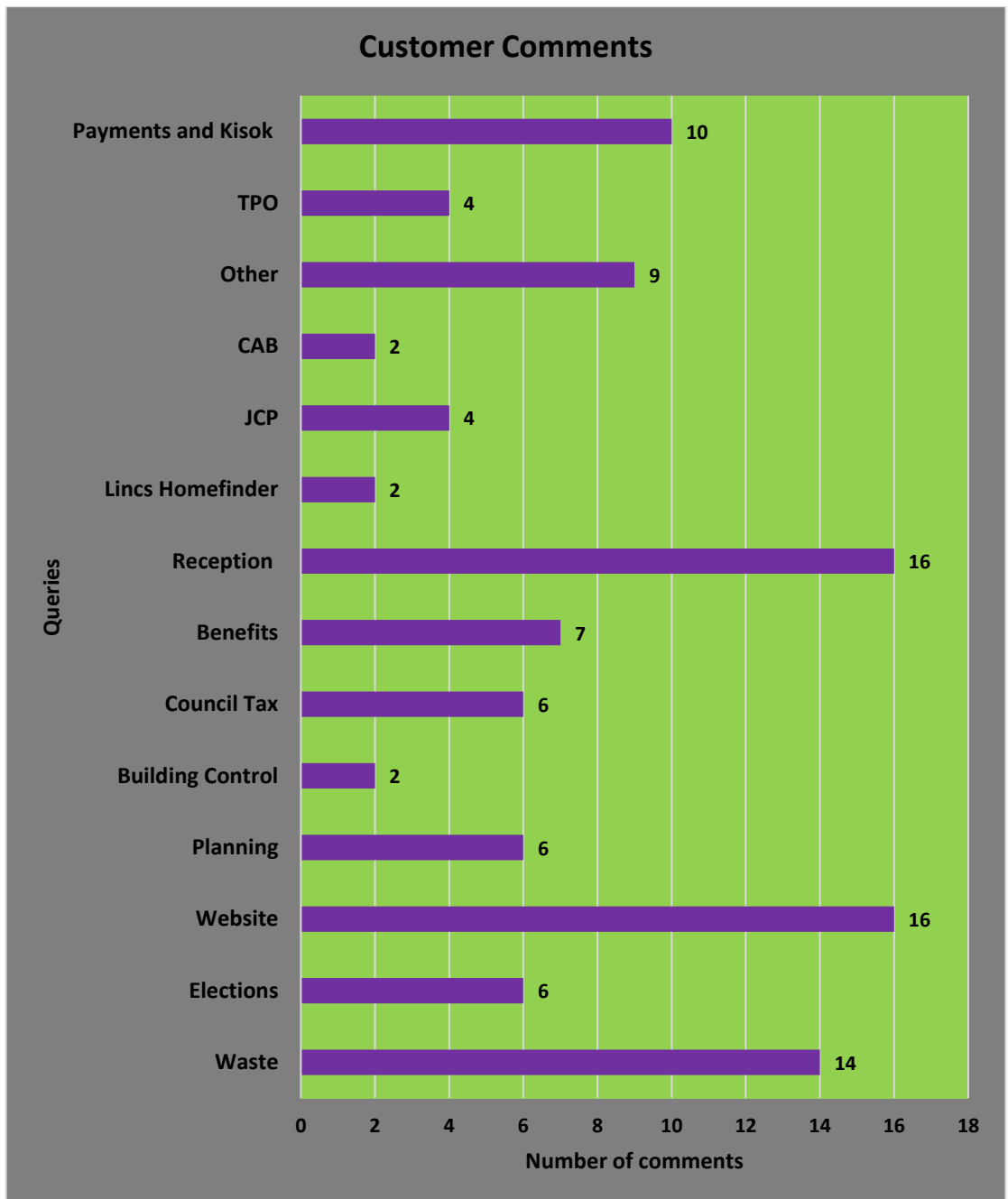
8.1 This report sets out comprehensive information on customer compliment, comments and complaints and this feedback will continue to be used to improve services.

8.2 It should also be noted that development management received both the highest number of compliments and complaints within the Council.

Appendix A - What compliments are about



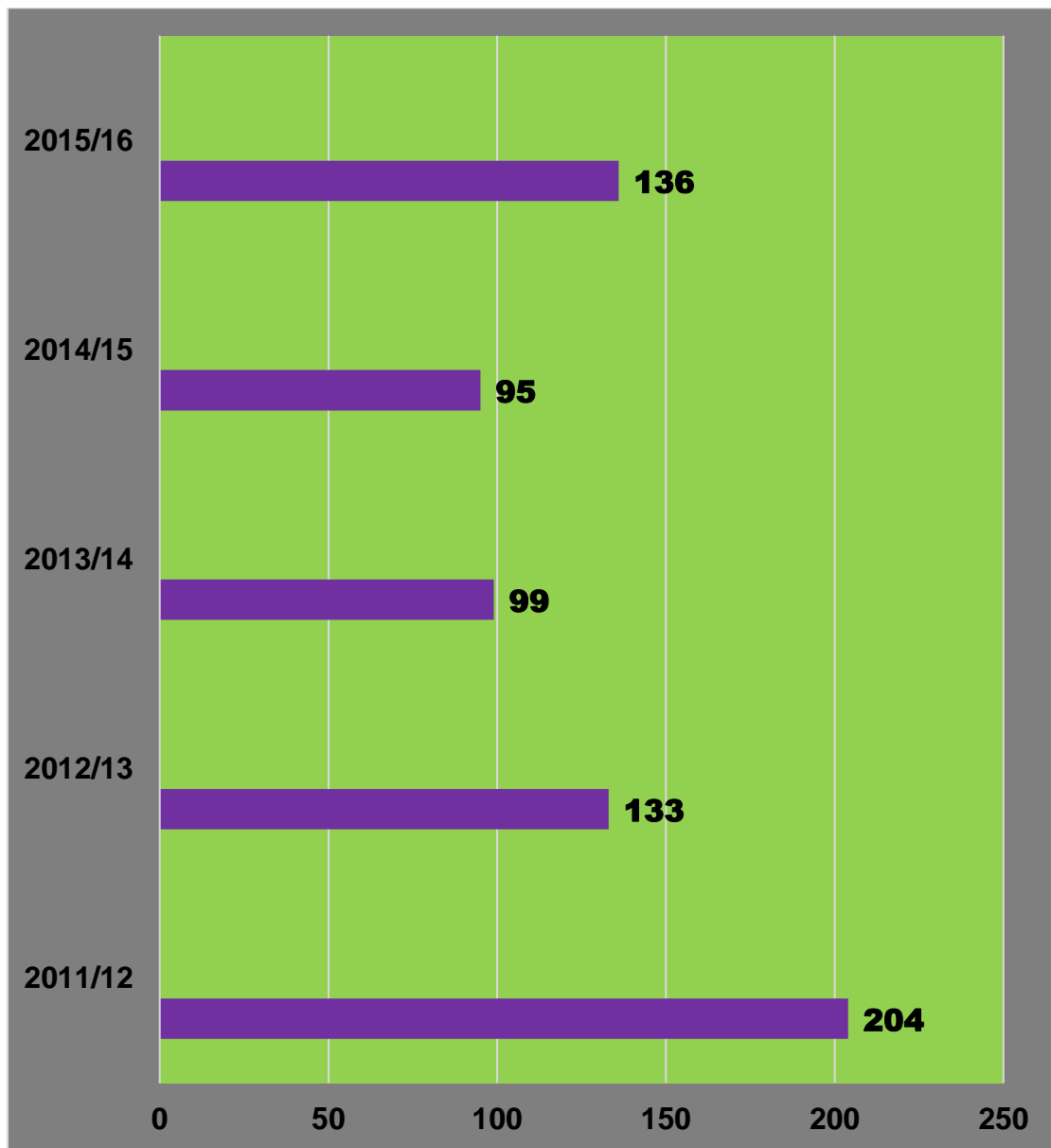
Appendix B - What customer commented about?



Appendix C - You Said We Did

Comment	What we did
Struggled to find out how to pay green bin on website.	We put this service in a more prominent position on the website
Customer wanted to bring pet dog into reception.	Increased size of and how many assistance dogs only signs for reception
The Colours of old website are not friendly for disabled customers	This was fed into the website working group and colours have been changed to be more disabled friendly
Having to make benefits appointments for short queries.	Implemented quick appointment system
Need more help when using computers in public services hub	Set up system of digital volunteers to help customers
No opening times for CAB on door.	Asked CAB to advertise their opening times
Could we have more than one computer that prints	All self-service computers now linked to printer
Please can you let me know which is my parish council as your website shows conflicting information.	Customer Services checked the website and it showed conflicting information. This has now been amended.
Your website should have a link to market officers details/ who to speak to about getting a market stall. Found a lot of information about terms and conditions, etc. but not the basic info wanted	The web team amended the website and to reflect this requirements
Could not find opening times of the Guildhall on website.	These now on website

Appendix D - Volumes of complaints from 2011/12 to 2015/16.



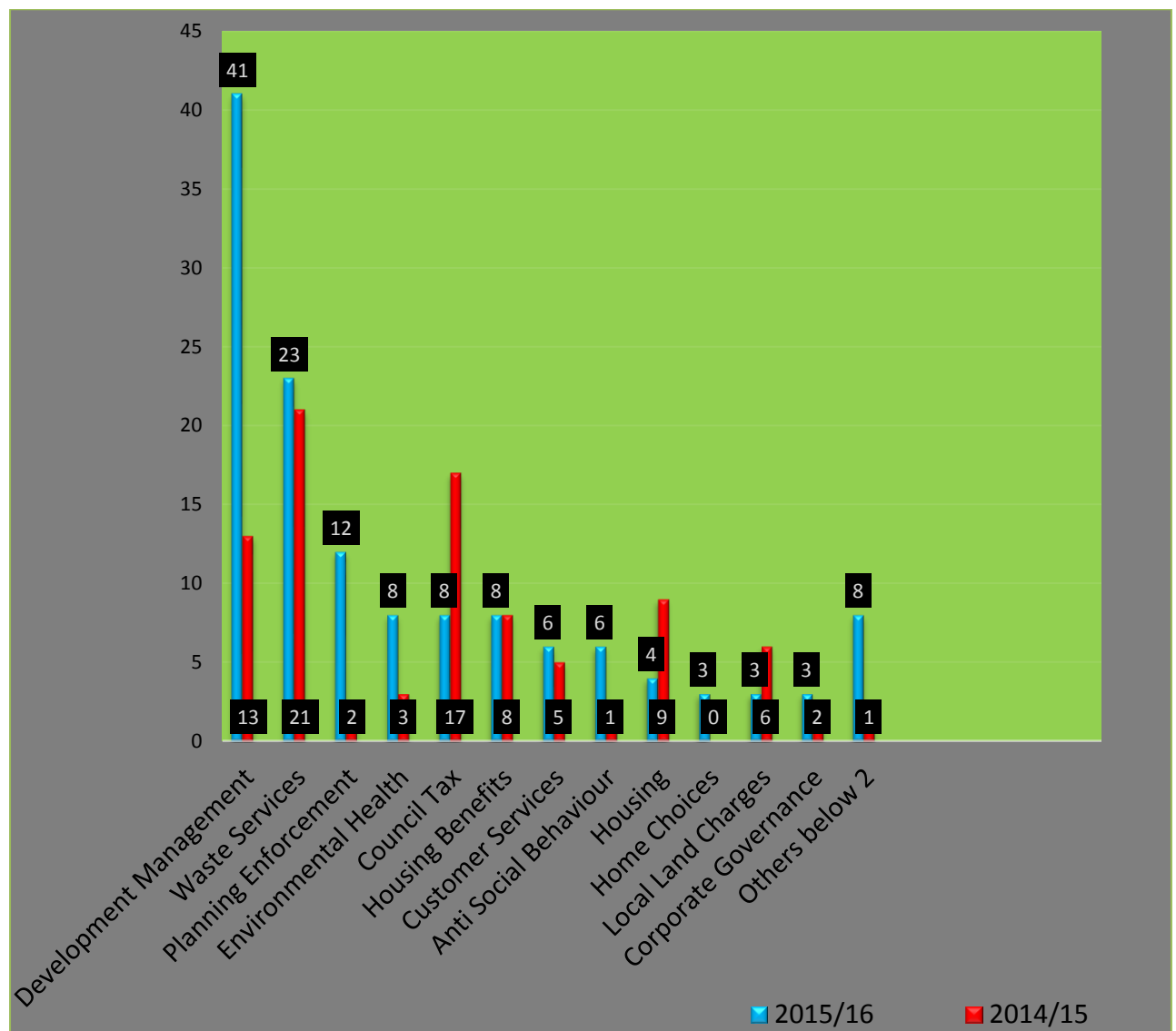
Appendix E - Volumes of complaints received across all sections during 2014/15 and 2015/16

The graph shows increases in complaints during 2015/16. Analysis of complaints has been undertaken to understand why this is and there is no clear evidence to demonstrate a continued failure in a particular way of delivering a service or in the way staff deliver services.

It should also be noted that the team with the largest number of complaints also received the largest number of compliments during 2015/16

Our customers come in many guises and as such, many customers that deal with areas such as planning will have a professional background and are therefore more likely to challenge our professionalism or decision making process than customers from more vulnerable sections of our community.

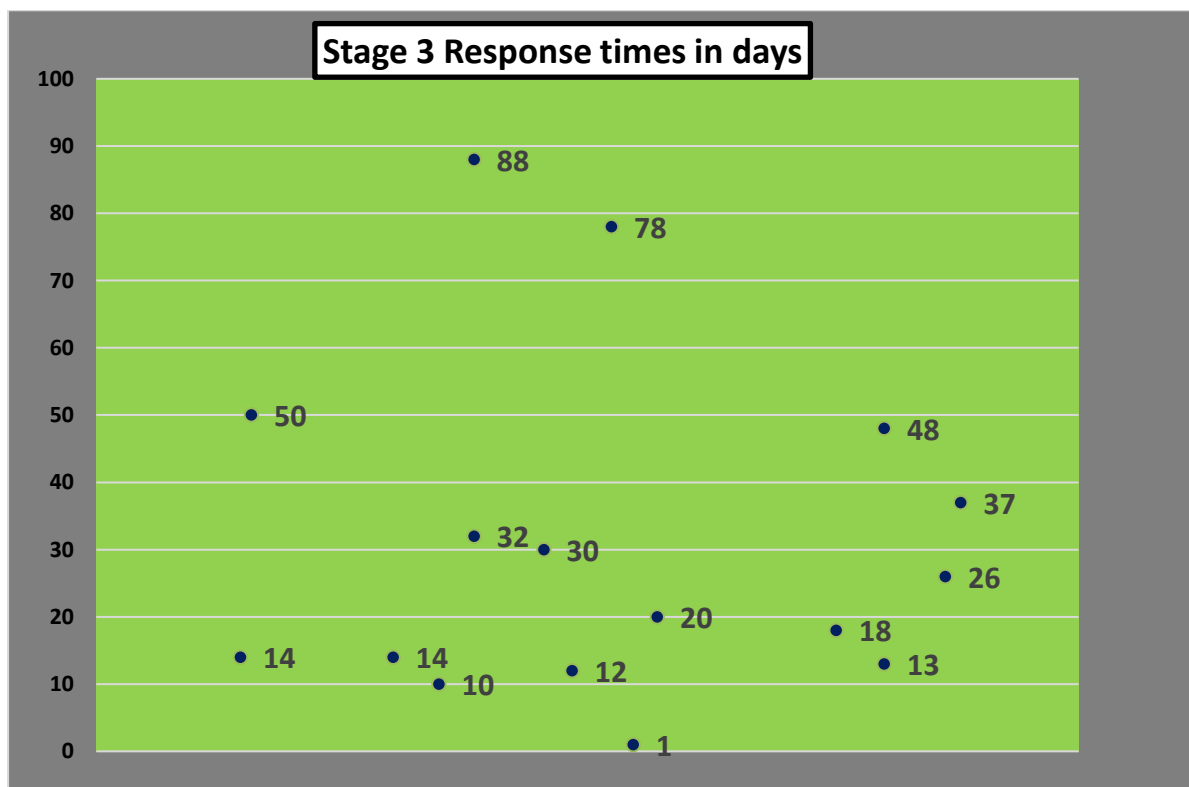
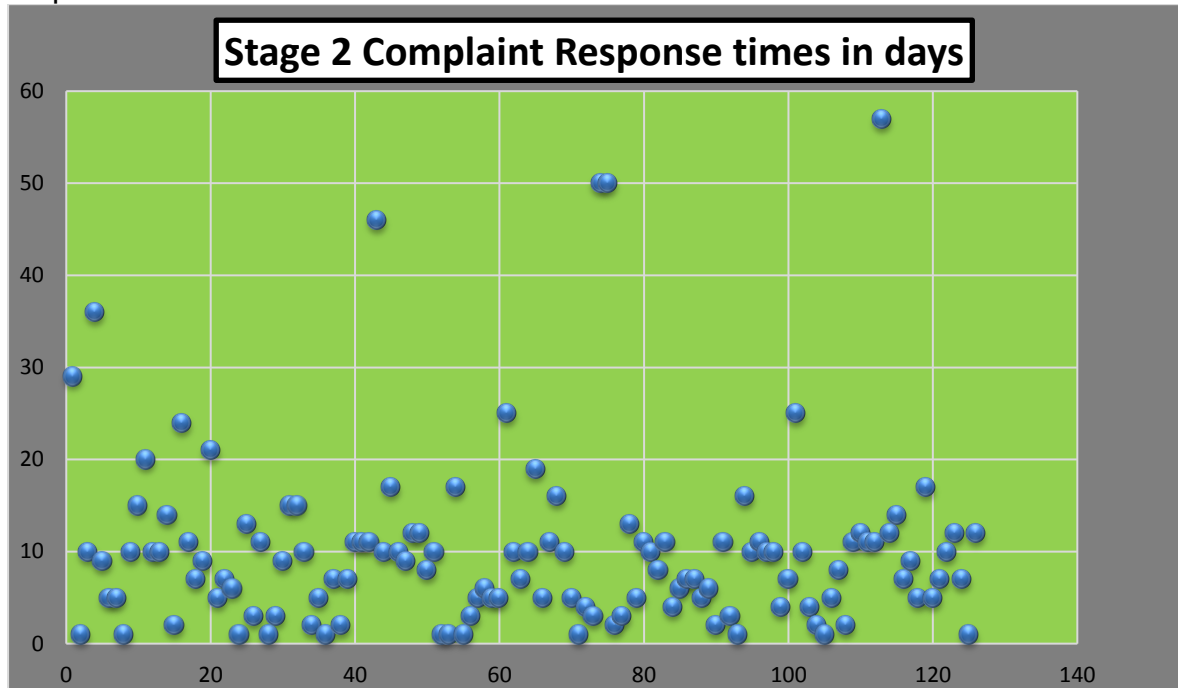
This is a challenge for the council in terms of how we gain confidence from both sets of customers, in the delivery of our services in difficult and challenging financial times.



Appendix F - Time taken to resolve complaints at stage 2 and 3.

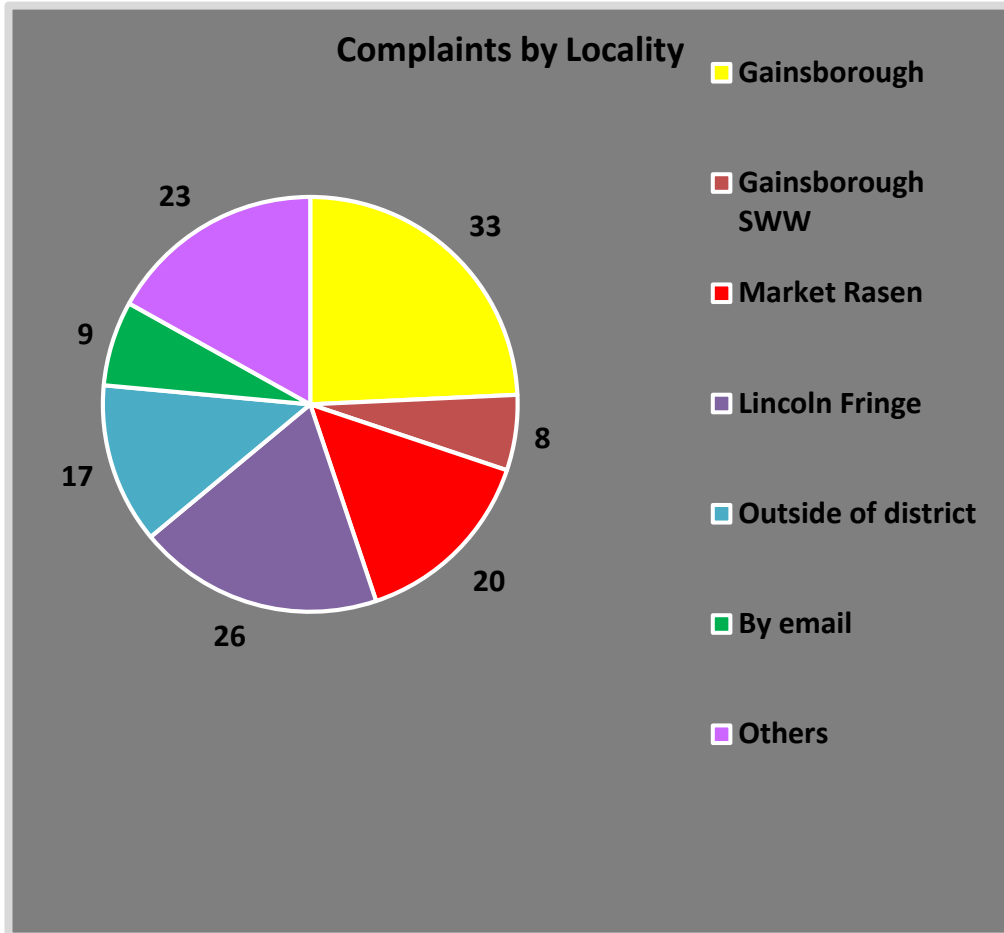
Where we have complex cases, that take more than 10 days to resolve, customer receive 'keeping in touch letters' to keep them up to date with progress.

During the internal review we will be looking to see how we can improve on response times.

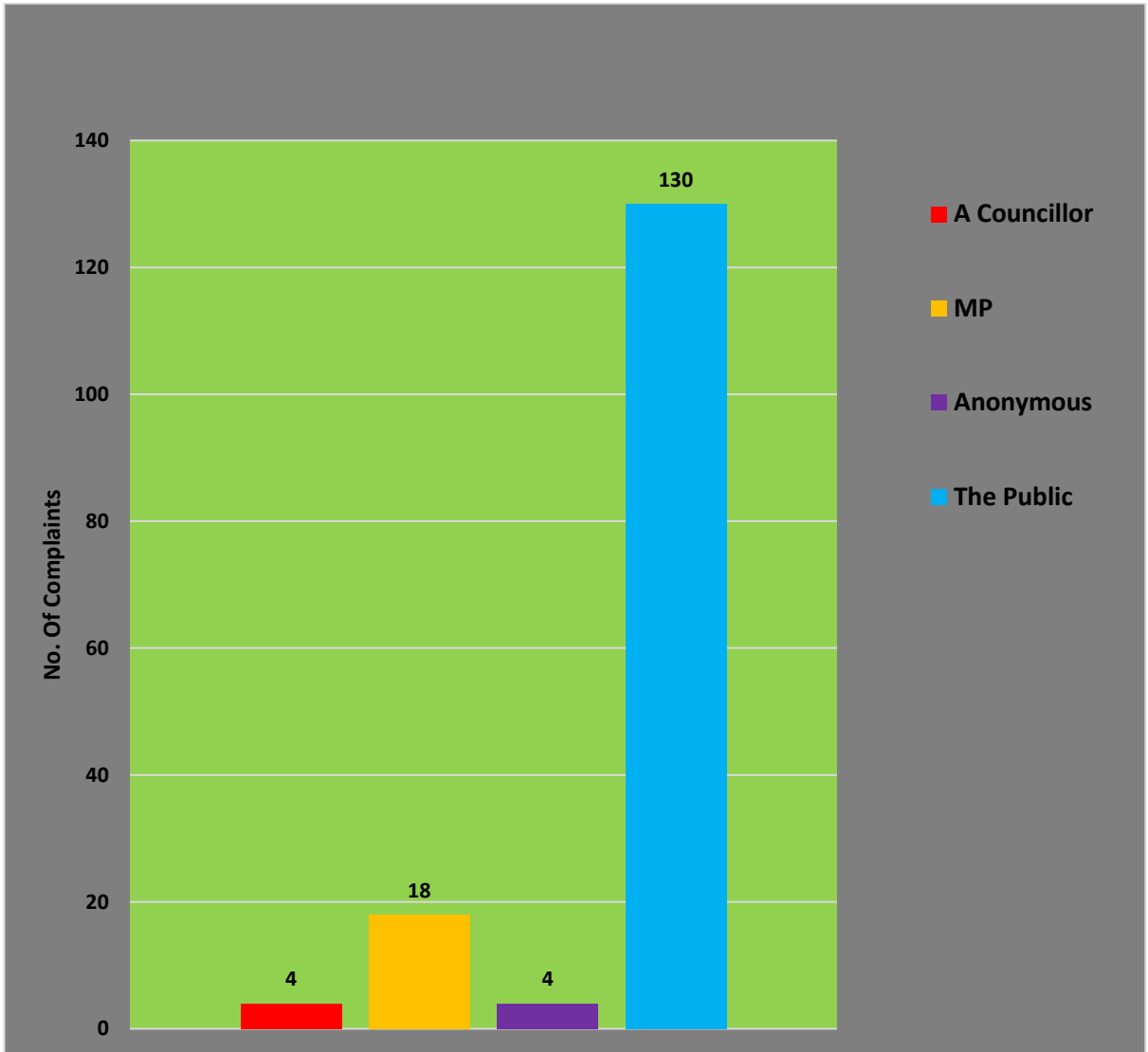


Appendix G - Complaints by locality 2015/2016

This shows the areas we received complaints from, capturing complaints received by email, those outside of the district and the others are a mixture of anonymous complaints and complaints received by a 3rd party on a customer's behalf

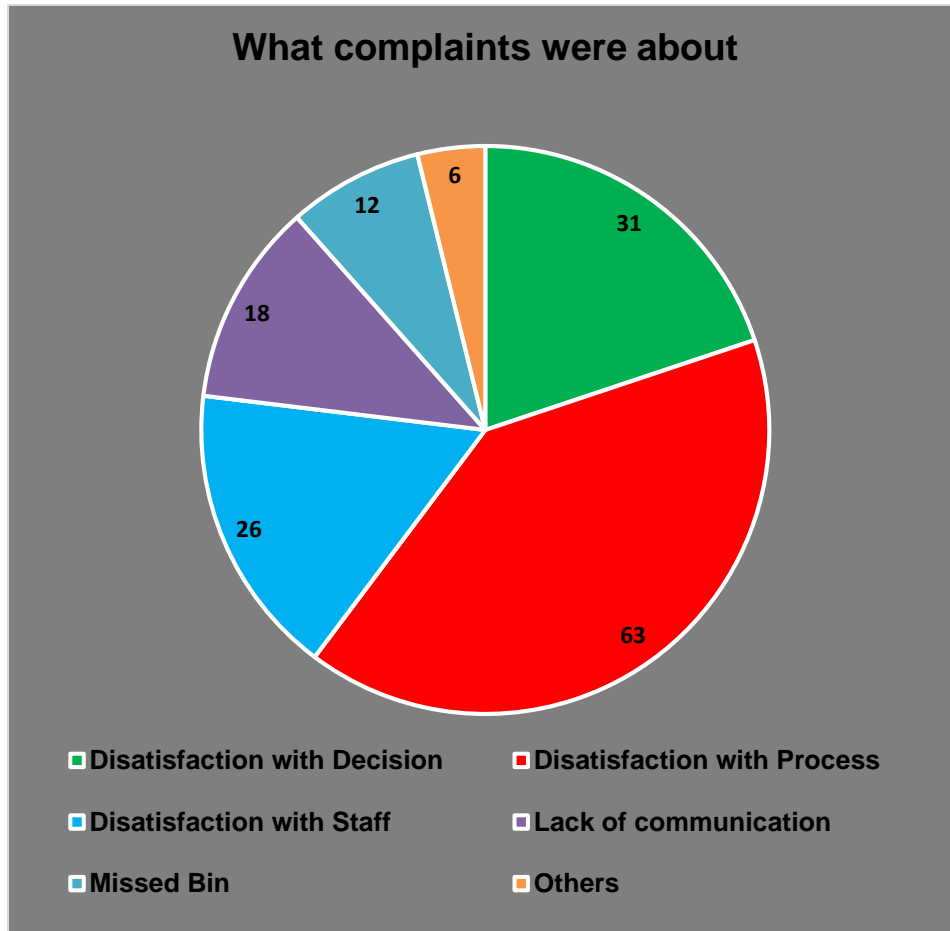


Appendix H - Complaints received from during 2015/16



Appendix I – What customers complained about?

This shows what customers complained about, this adds up to more than the number of complaints we have because some complaints were about more than one issue.



Report End



GA.14 16/17
Governance and Audit
Date: 26 July 2016

E

Subject: Summary of Fraud Investigations 2015/2016

Report by:	Angela Matthews
Contact Officer:	Angela Matthews Benefits Team Manager T: 01427 676551
Purpose / Summary:	To review the number, type and results of fraud investigations made by the Council during 2015/2016

RECOMMENDATIONS:
That Members note the 2015/2016 results and support the plan going forward to include corporate fraud investigations.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None

Financial :FIN/48/17

Staffing : None

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights : N/A

Risk Assessment : N/A

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities : None

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

Yes

No

Key Decision:

Yes

No

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to:

Review the delivery of our Corporate Fraud Work during 2015/2016

Provide information on the overall effectiveness of the authority's arrangements to counter fraud and corruption

2. Background

2.1 2015/16 is the first year that the newly established West Lindsey Corporate Fraud Team has dealt with all corporate fraud issues, the staff evolving from the Housing Benefit Fraud Investigations Unit whose work has now transferred in full to the Department for Works and Pensions.

2.2 The Corporate Fraud Team is designed to be a self-financing unit of two officers both with fraud detection experience. The unit trades internally and externally, currently commissioning work from departments within West Lindsey and neighbouring Local Authorities.

2.3 West Lindsey DC worked in conjunction with City of Lincoln Council and North Kesteven DC in 2015, investigations funded by the Lincolnshire County Counter Fraud unit to deliver a pilot scheme detecting and investigating Local Council Tax Reduction scheme fraud. The pilot bid was to achieve savings of £65,000 across the three councils.

2.4 Other work carried out by the Corporate Fraud Team during 2015/16 included Stage 3 complaints, staff investigations, investigating referrals from the DWP Housing Benefit Matching Service and making referrals and dealing with information requests from the Department for Works and Pensions fraud team.

2.3 The WLDC Corporate Fraud future work will include corporate issues in line with the now disbanded Audit Commission's advice to acknowledge that fraud takes place, to take measures to prevent those frauds taking place and to actively pursue fraudulent activity within this Local Authority. To this end the Whistleblowing policy and Anti-Money Laundering policy have been reviewed.

3. Analysis of Council Tax Support Investigations 2015/2016

3.1 Local Council Tax Support (CTS) Fraud - The initial bid to the County Counter Fraud Fund sought funding of £22,350 – this covered working an estimated caseload of 130 council tax support changes at a cost of £150 per case plus admin and travel expenses. Estimated savings were £65,000 based on investigating 130 cases and reducing CTS

entitlement by £500 per case over the reviewed period. The actual savings for West Lindsey DC were £6,244 (being 12.5% of the full CTR reduction of £49,953.11, the remainder being the County and Police savings) plus income of £2,660 from penalties

	Total	WLDC	City of Lincoln	North Kesteven DC
Number of investigations performed	165	141	21	3
TOTAL £ savings / adjustments calculated	£62,121.96	£49,953.11	£10,139.01	£2,029.84
£ Council Tax Benefit (pre-2013)	£5,780.99	£5,602.67	£178.32	£0.00
£ Council Tax Support adjustment	£39,589.03	£31,234.61	£6,912.23	£1,442.19
£ Future CTR overpayment	£16,751.94	£13,115.83	£3,048.46	£587.65
£ penalties	£2,940	£2,660	£140	£140
Penalties	42	38	2	2
Ad- pens	4	-	-	-
Prosecution	-	-	-	-
Warning letters	18	-	-	-

3.2 The criteria for investigation is that a Council Tax Support claim had been 'adjusted' by £250 or more and the information causing the necessary adjustment had been withheld by the claimant in excess of one month to warrant a £70 penalty. If the "adjustment" was more than £400 and deemed to be a fraudulent activity the case would be considered for an Administrative Penalty which would be equal to 50 % of the adjustment to a maximum of £1,000.

3.3 The table above shows that 28% of the referrals received from the Benefit processing team resulted in one of the Penalties being applied.

The addition of the administrative penalty was only considered and implemented towards the latter end of the scheme.

4 **Analysis of other Corporate Fraud activity 2015/16**

- 4.1 The team continue to receive and act on referrals from the Housing Benefit Matching Service (HBMS) and received 175 Referrals during 2015/16, each of which underwent some form of investigation.
- 4.2 The Corporate Fraud team also continued to receive referrals for Housing Benefit fraud from the general public and officers of the council. Between April 15 and March 16 the team made **101** referrals to the Department for Works and Pensions Fraud Team to investigate. These referrals do result in further information being requested by the DWP to support their investigation.

Housing Benefit Fraud reported to DWP by 'Referral Source'

	Case Review	Officer Report	Anonymous Report	Total
Q1	6	7	9	22
Q2	7	7	18	32
Q3	13	3	13	29
Q4	5	6	7	18

- 4.3 Corporate Fraud investigations during 2015/16 included six Stage 3 complaints, two Standards investigations and one internal investigation.

4. 2016/17 Fraud Work

- 4.1 For the coming year the team will look at further Local Council Tax Support Fraud, Business Rates discounts, a proactive drive to include other departments looking at empty homes, tenancy fraud (homeless applications), council tax payers/council tax exemptions and new Local Council Tax Support claims.
- 4.2 A pilot scheme has been agreed with Boston Borough Council to provide an investigation service looking at their Local Council Tax Supports fraud cases which will begin in July 2016.
- 4.3 There has also been a request to look at claims made for travel expenses by West Lindsey staff members.
- 4.4 Further promotion of the service internally and externally will be scheduled through the Summer and Autumn months

5. **Conclusion**

- 5.1 The new Corporate Fraud Team has concentrated on Council Tax Support fraud and building up an internal customer base to investigate all West Lindsey fraud and high-level complaints during 2015/16. The services of the investigator have been soft-marketed internally and with neighbouring Local Authorities resulting in genuine enquiries and referrals from Boston Borough Council, City of Lincoln, North Kesteven District Council and East Lindsey District Council.
- 5.2 The team has used 2015/16 to develop and test working procedures, a charging structure and a customer base whilst still generating an income or saving for the Authority.
- 5.3 Alongside the new fraud activities, the statutory duties such as making Housing Benefit fraud referrals and dealing with Housing Benefit Matching Service referrals have all been completed.



GA.15 16/17
Governance and Audit Committee
26 July 2016

F

Subject: Review of the Whistle Blowing Policy 2015/2016

Report by:	Alan Robinson
Contact Officer:	Alan Robinson Monitoring Officer T: 01427 676509
Purpose / Summary:	Annual Review of the Whistleblowing Policy

RECOMMENDATIONS:
That Members Assure themselves the Whistleblowing Policy is in place is working effectively. Where appropriate members may suggest improvements to the Policy.

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: None

Financial : 55 /17 None

Staffing : None

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights : N/A

Risk Assessment : N/A

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities : None

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

Yes

No

Key Decision:

Yes

No

1. Introduction

1.1 The Whistle Blowing Policy provides a method for employees to raise concerns about the running of the Council without the risk of victimisation. All employees have access top this policy. This

committee has been receiving regular updates on this matter since 2008

2. Whistle Blowing Policy

- 2.1 There have been no Whistle Blowing Procedures carried out during 2015/2016. The policy has been publicised to all staff member and it is also highlighted to new starters in their induction.

3 Conclusion

- 3.1 Whilst there have been no reported cases this year it is still vitally important that we maintain this policy and continue to publicise the reporting mechanism.

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GA.16 16/17
Governance & Audit
26th July 2016

G

Subject: Annual Governance Statement 2015/16 and Action Plan

Report by:	Director of Resources
Contact Officer:	Business Improvement/Corporate Governance Manager
Purpose / Summary:	To present to Members the Annual Governance Statement for 2015/16 and associated Action Plan. To also present the AGS 2014/15 Action Plan

RECOMMENDATION(S):
1. That Members approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2015/16 and associated Action Plan.
2. That Members sign off the Action Plan for 2014/15 as completed (bar the actions pertaining to the Local Plans Team and Development Management)

IMPLICATIONS

Legal: The Annual Governance Statement must comply with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011

Financial: None FIN/44/17

Staffing: None

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights: None

Risk Assessment: Risk management arrangements are part of corporate governance and issues raised under these arrangements have been included in the Annual Governance Statement

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities: None

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Internal Audit Annual Report

Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011

CIPFA Delivering Good Governance in Local Government Framework 2012

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)

Yes

No

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications

Yes

No

1. Background

- 1.1 The Annual Governance Statement is a formal statement under the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011, which details the Council's governance arrangements and issues for the previous year as an annual report of governance.
- 1.2 The system of corporate governance is the way in which we direct and control our services and functions to ensure that we make the best use of all resources.
- 1.3 Assurance of governance arrangements involves a process to test the framework and to gain confidence that it is operating as intended and that we are, "doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people in an open, honest, inclusive and timely manner."
- 1.4 The Council is required to produce an Annual Governance Statement for approval by 30th September 2016 to accompany the Council's Statement of Accounts.
- 1.5 The Annual Governance Statement includes a summary of the governance framework and identifies those areas where further action is required to achieve full assurance.

2 Developing the Annual Governance Statement

- 2.1 Sources of information used to develop the Statement include:
 - The development of the framework itself
 - The Combined Assurance Report 2015/16
 - Internal Audit Annual Report
 - Internal Audit "limited assurance" reports
 - The management of strategic and corporate risks
 - External Audit Annual Audit Letter
 - Complaints and lessons learnt
 - Consultation results
 - Ombudsman investigations
 - Corporate functions assurance statements – Legal, Health & Safety, ICT. Procurement
 - Service Managers – any service or performance issues, including signed assurance that the internal control and governance assurance framework has been upheld, covering:
 - Review of key controls
 - Budget setting and allocation of resources
 - Performance management
 - Risk management
 - Financial and legal implications
 - The position with actions to achieve assurance from the 2014/15 Annual Governance Statement Action Plan

3 The Framework

3.1 The Governance Framework follows the six CIPFA principles of good governance and is formed by the systems and processes, standards, policies and activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community.

3.2 Under each of the principles we have identified improvements that have taken place during the year, activity to support the principle, any significant issues and actions that will be undertaken to address any issues or to develop the principles further.

4. Annual Governance Statement 2015/16

4.1 The Statement for 2015/16 is available for review.

5. Issues

5.1 Issues that have been identified as requiring attention to ensure good governance and which will be addressed in the coming year are:

1. **Strategic & Spatial Planning** – upon completion of the Local Plan and in light of the Greater Lincolnshire focus on strategic and spatial planning, we need to ensure West Lindsey's growth needs and strategic planning duties are understood and addressed to include duty to co-operate with all relevant strategic planning areas including all Nottinghamshire authorities
2. **Development Management** – to ensure issues relating to capacity, performance and customer care are addressed and sustainable improvements are realised
3. **Strategic Programme Delivery** - an extensive capital programme has been agreed and we therefore need to ensure that robust and appropriate governance arrangements are implemented to oversee its delivery and financial management governance and other strategic considerations e.g. stakeholder engagement are adequate to support complex change
4. **Information Governance & Security** – to ensure that appropriate controls and policies are in place to provide on-going mitigation for the Council against the risk of cyber-crime and/or leakage of data and information.
5. **Intelligent Clienting** – to address the recognised issues across the CBL partnership and develop improved processes for customers and to review similar areas where good practice exists and apply learning to similar circumstances across the organisation
6. **Selective Licensing** - to review the implementation, monitoring and initial performance of the selective licensing project in the Gainsborough South West Ward.

6. Annual Governance Statement 2015/16 Action Plan

6.1 To address the issues raised at 5.1 above an action plan has been developed containing SMART actions which when completed will realise a satisfactory state of affairs. The action plan is the main vehicle through which Members of

the Governance & Audit Committee are provided with updates on progress against the completion of the required actions.

6.2 The Action Plan for 2015/16 is available for review.

7. Annual Governance Statement 2014/15 Action Plan

7.1 Progress has been made against the issues identified for inclusion within last years' action plan to such an extent that all actions have been completed, bar those relating to the Central Lincolnshire Local Plans Team and Development Management both of which have which have timeframes running into 2016/17. Consequently, as detailed above, these matters will be retained for inclusion in the action plan for 2015/16.

7.2 The 2014/15 Action Plan is available for review.

7.3 Members are asked to confirm their satisfaction with the stated position.

WEST LINDSEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Annual Governance Statement 2015/16



SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

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

In discharging this overall responsibility, West Lindsey District Council has put in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

West Lindsey District Council has adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government. We are conscious of fresh guidance provided by CIPFA/SOLACE in relation to corporate governance frameworks and will consider their recent report. A copy of the authority's framework is on our website contained within the [Codes and Protocols](#) section of The Constitution.

This Annual Governance Statement explains how West Lindsey District Council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, regulations 4(3) and 4(4), which requires all relevant bodies to prepare and publish an annual governance statement.

THE PURPOSE OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, culture and values by which the authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its communities. It enables the authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services that are value for money. The framework has been reviewed during the year and is deemed to be relevant and robust.

The system of internal control is an important 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 system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of West Lindsey District Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the

likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The governance framework has been in place at West Lindsey District Council for the year ended 31st March 2016 and up to the date of approval of the statement of accounts at a meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee on 15th September 2016.

THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Governance Framework is presented in detail at Appendix One with commentary about improvements made during the year and improvements still required. Some of the key features of the Governance Framework are set out below.

The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's vision for the District and sets out the key strategic objectives which will deliver these outcomes for our communities. The Corporate Plan is explicitly aligned to the Medium Term Financial Plan, ensuring that the aspirations in the Plan are realistic in the context of the funding constraints placed on the Council. The Corporate Plan is reviewed annually and takes into account feedback from surveys conducted with the citizens of West Lindsey.

The Constitution of West Lindsey District Council establishes the roles and responsibilities of the Full Council, Policy Committees, scrutiny and officer functions, with clear delegation arrangements and protocols for effective communication in respect of the authority and partnership arrangements. The Constitution is reviewed annually to ensure it continues to be fit for purpose.

The Constitution also contains rules of procedures (standing orders and financial regulations) that define clearly how decisions are taken and where authority lies for decisions. The statutory roles of Head of the Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Chief Financial Officer are described together with their contributions to provide robust assurance on governance and that expenditure is lawful and in line with approved budgets and procedures. The influence and oversight exerted by these posts is backed by the post-holders' membership of the Corporate Leadership Team.

West Lindsey District Council has developed, communicated and embedded codes of conduct, defining the standards of behaviour for both Members and staff. In addition, training needs are identified through development appraisals and reviews, enabling individuals to undertake their present role effectively and have the opportunity to develop to meet their own and the Council's needs.

West Lindsey District Council has responsibility for conducting at least annually a review of the effectiveness of its governance framework including the system of internal control. The review is informed by:

- 1. The Combined Assurance Report – made up from:**
 - a) Feedback from senior managers within the Authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment on its effectiveness within their areas
 - b) An independent review by the Corporate Governance Team
 - c) The findings of the Annual Audit Work Plan
 - d) Third Party assessment e.g. peer review
- 2. The Annual Review of Complaints**
- 3. The Annual Review of The Constitution**
- 4. The Annual Review of the Effectiveness of Internal Audit**
- 5. The Annual Review of Whistleblowing**
- 6. The Annual Review of Fraud**
- 7. The Head of Internal Audit’s Annual Report**
- 8. Comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates**

These reviews have been considered by the Governance and Audit Committee as well as a draft version of this governance statement and the arrangements are deemed as being fit for purpose.

The areas already addressed and those to be specifically addressed via an action plan to be developed in the coming year are outlined below.

SIGNIFICANT GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Over the last year the Council has consolidated its progress made over previous years in further strengthening its corporate governance arrangements and procedures and to consistently communicate the message across the organisation that governance is an essential component of corporate activity. This work has been recognised by the Head of Internal Audit. In providing her annual opinion she has assessed our overall governance, risk management and financial management arrangements as all being ‘green’ in nature.

To enhance capacity and capability across the Council a senior management restructure, leading to the appointment of Strategic Leads is almost complete with one remaining Strategic Lead position remaining under consideration.

We also continue to review and refresh where appropriate our processes in relation to project management, partnership arrangements, risk management and contract management to provide clear guidance and support and have undertaken a number of workshops with staff to ensure that procedures are fully understood. Significant work has also been undertaken to design appropriate Programme Board structures to provide appropriate support and scrutiny in relation to project development and delivery. These arrangements were reflected in the positive outcome of an internal audit into our decision making processes.

Considerable attention has been paid to asset management. We have finalised the Council’s Property and Land Management Strategy and the Commercial Plan is working through its delivery actions which have been reviewed by Full Council. Consideration is being paid to the skills and capacity required to advance these

areas of work.

Training for staff and Members has also taken place as have workshop sessions and regular feedback to Members and the Governance Corporate Leadership Team (GCLT) on governance related matters. A comprehensive, well attended and well received induction programme was held for Members following the May 2015 elections. This provides a sound footing from which Members can develop into their roles. We have reviewed our usage of Approved Codes of Practice (ACoPs) which are designed to provide clarity and ensure accountability for the consistent application of relevant processes and procedures.

A refresh of measures to be incorporated into the Council's Progress and Delivery reporting has been undertaken to ensure that we report against meaningful aspects of service delivery. A key aspect of this is to ensure that progress towards the desired outcomes in the Council's new Corporate Plan are tracked.

During 2015/16 West Lindsey District Council has also regularly reviewed progress against the significant issues identified in the previous year's AGS (2014/15). Issues that have been sufficiently progressed and so are now removed from the AGS (2014/15) action plan are:

1. **Asset Management** – to produce a relevant and coherent Asset Management Plan and effective supporting processes and structures
2. **Review of Risk Strategy** – to ensure it is aligned with new structures within the Council
3. **Development Management** – to ensure issues relating to capacity; performance and customer care are addressed and sustainable improvements are realised
4. **Review of The Constitution & Streamlining of Decision Making** – to ensure it supports new structures, governance and decision making frameworks; supports commercial aspirations and identifies and removes unnecessary bureaucracy
5. **Corporate Plan** – new Plan to be produced to reflect changing issues facing the District and the priorities of the new Administration and the concept of the 'golden thread' is evident
6. **Delivery of Finance Matters II** – to design and implement a further finance related training programme to further develop staff in line with the Council's commercial and entrepreneurial ambitions
7. **Member Induction and Development** – to ensure an effective democratic framework and appropriate skills on the part of newly elected and returning Members supported by an appropriate development programme
8. **Contract Management** – to ensure we have a functional database upon which to record all contract related information and documentation and that contract management is regarded by relevant officers as an essential component of day to day management duties

Actions relating to **Central Lincolnshire Local Plans Team** and **Development Management** have timeframes for completion extending beyond the lifespan of the 2014/15 action plan and have therefore been rolled forward into the action plan for 2015/16.

SIGNIFICANT CURRENT ISSUES TO BE A FOCUS IN 2016/17.

For 2016/17, the Council will pay attention to a number of issues as described below and will continue to stress the message across the organisation that governance is a core component of corporate activity. Hence all officers are required to play a part in ensuring that our processes and systems are robust and adhered to. On-going 'testing' of our processes will be undertaken and we will continue to work in a collaborative manner with Internal and External Audit colleagues.

In the Chancellor's Budget Statement on 16th March 2016, it was announced that approval had been granted for a Devolution Deal for Greater Lincolnshire. Council were subsequently provided with an overview of the Deal and have agreed to consult on the proposal to create a Combined Authority for Greater Lincolnshire. This work is now underway and at present no issues have arisen to warrant inclusion among our significant issues. However, we are mindful of the scale and complexity of this proposal and will maintain close scrutiny of developments.

Those issues that have been identified as requiring particular attention during 2016/17 are reproduced below. These were identified by GCLT; via reference to Internal Audit opinion and through the work undertaken to complete the Council's Combined Assurance Report for 2015/16. Progress will be made in 2016/17, monitored and driven forward by GCLT and the Governance and Audit Committee in conjunction with the Challenge and Improvement Committee.

The significant issues identified are:

1. **Strategic & Spatial Planning** – upon completion of the Local Plan and in light of the Greater Lincolnshire focus on strategic and spatial planning, we need to ensure West Lindsey's growth needs and strategic planning duties are understood and addressed to include duty to co-operate with all relevant strategic planning areas including all Nottinghamshire authorities
2. **Development Management** - to ensure issues relating to capacity; performance and customer care are addressed and sustainable improvements are realised
3. **Strategic Programme Delivery** - an extensive capital programme has been agreed and we therefore need to ensure that robust and appropriate governance arrangements are implemented to oversee its delivery and financial management governance and other strategic considerations e.g. stakeholder engagement are adequate to support complex change
4. **Information Governance & Security** – to ensure that appropriate controls and policies are in place to provide on-going mitigation for the Council against the risk of cyber-crime and/or leakage of data and information
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6. **Selective Licensing** - to review the implementation, monitoring and initial performance of the selective licensing project in the Gainsborough South West Ward

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters via an action plan to further enhance our governance arrangements. We are satisfied that these steps will address the need for improvements that were identified in our review of effectiveness and will monitor their implementation and operation as part of our next annual review. There have been no significant events or developments relating to the governance system between the year-end and the date on which the Statement of Accounts were signed by the responsible financial officer.

Signed  Date _____
Leader of the Council on behalf of West Lindsey District Council

Signed  Date _____
Chief Executive on behalf of West Lindsey District Council

APPENDIX 1 - THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK & REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

1. The Council's Vision

Objective: Developing, communicating, operationalising and reviewing the Council's vision.

This section incorporates information relating to:

- identifying and communicating the Council's vision
- reviewing the Council's vision and its implications for the Council's governance arrangements
- translating the vision into objectives for the Council and its partnerships

To help identify priorities, the Council analyses information from external sources, internal statistics, engagement events, working with partners and horizon scanning reports.

Priorities are tested further through public consultation with both the Citizen's Panel (an established representative group of up to 1500 local residents) and residents more generally. This is supplemented by engagement with a range of businesses and third sector organisations and Member workshops, which build on the identified community priorities.

Following elections in May 2015 and the appointment of a new administration, the Council embarked upon the production of a new Corporate Plan for the period 2016-2020. The Plan was approved by Council in March 2016. The overall vision has been reviewed and the following strategic priorities developed:

- Theme 1: Open for Business

- Theme 2: Asset Management
- Theme 3: People First
- Theme 4: Central Lincolnshire Local Plan
- Theme 5: Partnership/Devolution
- Theme 6: Excellent Value for Money Services

The Corporate Plan is explicitly linked to the Medium Term Financial Plan through to 2020.

The Council publishes its [Corporate Plan](#) on its website in accordance with requirements for transparency and making information available for local people.

The Council's Corporate Plan is delivered through a number of Programme Boards which have clear terms of reference outlining responsibilities for delivery. Each programme board delivery plan is further translated into business and service plans, team plans and personal actions (through the appraisal process), which contain specific key objectives, desired outcomes, responsibilities and targets. This ensures that the necessary resources, both staff and financial, are allocated to deliver the service plans and informs the Medium Term Financial Plan.

In addition to the Corporate Plan and MTFP, the Council has also published its Commercial Plan and the required deliverables. These three strategic documents complement one another and set the direction for the Council over the medium-term

The Council continues to operate in a challenging short and medium term financial environment. This challenge is not new to the Council and it has, since 2008, undergone a significant review of its services to realise substantial savings. However, for the year ending 31st March 2016 the authority continued to operate within a challenging financial environment as a consequence of further cuts in government funding and local economic conditions, with the outlook for the coming years equally challenging (see [WLDC Budget Book 2016/17 to 2020/21](#)).

Within this context the priorities for the Financial Strategy are to maximise available resources through effective and efficient delivery of services and identify and drive innovative and commercial approaches to service delivery, resourcing and the use of our land and property assets. This remains important so as to achieve financial sustainability. The positive action taken by the Council to date means that it is relatively well placed to respond to these challenges. There are however further uncertain times ahead (despite indicators of economic recovery) and it is essential that the Council continues to take proactive and sustained action as without this the Council's financial position will not be sustainable in the longer term.

Budgets are controlled and monitored by Budget Managers who are supported by regular liaison meetings with the Council's accountants. Budget and performance monitoring is reported to Members and GCLT in the form of regular Budget Monitoring and Progress and Delivery Reports.

A robust process of monitoring and the taking of responsible actions in managing its budget ensures the Council remains in a good position to achieve the additional savings/income targets of approximately £2.5m by 2020/21 in a considered manner.

To ensure that staff possess the necessary financial knowledge and skills, the Council has commenced delivery of a further programme of finance related training under the banner 'Finance Matters II'. This is intended to complement and enhance the previous training (Finance Matters) delivered to staff three years ago.

2. Measuring the Quality of Services

Objective: Measuring the quality of services for users, ensuring they are delivered in accordance with the authority's objectives and ensuring that they represent the best use of resources and value for money

Performance Management & Value for Money

During the year, the Council has monitored the effectiveness of the Progress and Delivery report in monitoring and reporting on performance, with the Challenge and Improvement Committee retaining oversight. A sub-group of the Committee has met once again to discuss the need for a refresh of measures for 2016/17 to ensure that progress against the achievement of corporate priorities can be tracked. We are keen to stress the message that any measures adopted should be able to help the Council learn and improve. The Chief Operating Officer (COO) is responsible for performance management and provides:

1. Monthly reports to the GCLT
2. Quarterly Progress and Delivery reports to the policy committees and the scrutiny committee
3. Assurance that the reports provide quality and contextual data for Members

Specific reference has been made to our approach to achieving value for money in the MTFP. Our approach received a positive outcome when audited by External Audit.

Individual performance is discussed via the appraisal system for employees, which continues to be monitored to ensure that it is applied consistently.

The Council has adhered to the transparency agenda by publishing spend over £250 on the Council's web site on a monthly basis and continues to meet the legal requirements to publish equality objectives which are included in the Corporate Plan.

Commissioning Partnerships

To achieve value for money and the best use of resources, the Council has adopted a positive approach to partnership working and has retained a number of shared working arrangements, mainly with North Kesteven District Council. Other key partnerships include Lincolnshire Legal Services, Procurement Lincolnshire and the creation of a formal statutory body to consider planning policy across Central Lincolnshire. Additionally, key contractual partnerships incorporating performance management aspects are in place for a range of services.

To ensure that the Council considers the appropriateness of partnership working prior to entering into arrangements, an ACoP is in place to offer guidance and

workshops have been held with staff to discuss the topic. It is essential that officers involved in partnership working consider value for money by assessing the on-going importance of any partnership and its effectiveness in meeting intended outcomes.

Contract Management

Effective contract management is key to ensuring that value for money is achieved. An internal audit report into the Council's contract management procedures during 2014/15 produced a finding of 'major improvement required'. As a result a comprehensive action plan was developed to address a wide range of identified issues. Significant work has been undertaken during 2015/16 to deliver against the action plan. These included staff workshops, revision of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and ACoP, achieving improved functionality of the contract management system and greater level of contract related information created and held on the system. A follow-up audit was undertaken towards the end of 2015/16 and found significant improvement culminating in an assurance rating of substantial assurance.

Development Management

This service area remains the focus of attention and has been challenging over the last few years with issues in respect of performance and customer care; compounded by high volumes of applications, staff shortages and challenges relating to appropriate management skills leading to a significant deterioration in the service offered and its reputation across the District has suffered. To remedy matters a series of actions have been undertaken, including an internally commissioned improvement plan, an audit undertaken by Internal Audit which provided insight into a number of areas, the provision of colleagues to support the service in respect of performance management and customer care skills and the commissioning of a peer review conducted by the Planning Advisory Service. It is fair to say that this final action has produced the most comprehensive response and a number of wide-ranging actions covering a number of topics is in place and is being worked through. Despite all of the individual interventions, management recognise that it is an essential issue. Therefore appropriate oversight of actions and improvements are in place up to Chief Executive level thereby providing a robust second line of assurance. The Council is acutely aware of the implications of poor performance as spelled out in the recent Housing & Planning Bill and is keen to avert any potential action from being taken.

Customer Feedback

The Council recognises the important role that customer feedback plays in assessing the quality and range of the services delivered. Public consultation plays an integral role in informing budget proposals. Customer satisfaction is an integral component of the Council's performance measurement metrics and an annual review of complaints is reported to GCLT, wider management and Members via a report to the Governance & Audit and the Challenge and Improvement Committees detailing the type and volumes of complaints and comparative analysis with previous years. Contextual information is also provided.

In addition a pro-active stance is taken across a number of services in the form of customer satisfaction surveys. The consistent application of this across the Council is a key aim in support of effective performance management.

3. Roles, Responsibilities and Delegations

Objective: Defining and documenting the roles and responsibilities of the Full Council, Policy Committees, scrutiny and officer functions, with clear delegation arrangements and protocols for effective communication in respect of the authority and partnerships arrangements

The Council has an overview and scrutiny function and there is a clear split between Policy and Scrutiny. Overview and Scrutiny contributes to the decision making process.

The Council's policy and decision-making process is defined in detail in The Constitution but can be summarised as follows:

- a) The Budget and Policy Framework is decided by Council and has significant links to the Corporate Plan
- b) The Corporate Policy and Resources Committee formulates policy, plans and strategies which do not form part of the Council's Policy Framework. They are responsible for the effective use of all council resources whether land finances, property or personnel
- c) The Prosperous Communities Committee deals with economic development, leisure and cultural, environmental issues and community issues. They formulate policy, plans and strategies other than those identified for adoption by the Council or the Corporate Policy and Resources Committee
- d) The scrutiny function is provided by the Challenge and Improvement Committee which examines the activity of the policy committees to ensure they deliver Council policy and can call the policy committees to account for aspects of poor performance in areas under their jurisdiction
- e) The Challenge and Improvement Committee works to an individual work programme of matters to be considered for the year ahead and there is a monitoring role for the Committee to ensure delivery of the programme. Additionally the Committee invites and raises questions and discussion with strategic partners responsible for service delivery across the District
- f) The Challenge and Improvement Committee can also establish time limited groups to carry out in depth reviews
- g) Quasi-judicial matters such as Planning and Licensing are dealt with through separate Planning and Licensing Committees

The scheme of delegated and reserved powers is set out within The Constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for collective decision of the Council, taking account of relevant legislation.

The Annual Council meeting each year considers a report from the Monitoring Officer which reviews The Constitution to ensure it remains robust and effective. This allows for appropriate amendments to be made.

There are protocols for effective communication which include:

- a) Member/Officer Relations Protocol
- b) Leaders Panel regularly meet with designated officers and Chief Officers
- c) Group Leaders meetings with Key Officers
- d) Chair's Briefs
- e) There is a Members Forum
- f) 'Call-in' protocol which enables a decision of the Policy Committees to be questioned by Scrutiny before it is finally approved

The Chief Executive and Leader have established a communication process and they have mechanisms in place to manage the delivery of objectives.

4. Standards of Behaviour

Objective: Developing, communicating and embedding codes of conduct, defining the standards of behavior for Members and staff

It is vital that there is a constructive working relationship between elected Members and Officers and that the respective roles are carried out to a high standard.

The Council's leadership is responsible for setting the tone for the organisation and it is tasked with creating a climate of openness, support and respect. A set of organisational behaviours and core values are in place and have been communicated. Lead Member positions also have clear role descriptions set out within The Constitution and these make reference to the behaviours expected when undertaking their duties.

Standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of Members and staff, of work between Members and staff and between the Council, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols.

This includes:

- a. Members and Co-opted Members Code of Conduct
- b. Guidance when dealing with Planning Matters
- c. Protocol on Member/Officer Relations (Operational Conventions protocol)
- d. Officer Code of Conduct
- e. Whistle Blowing Policy
- f. Complaints Procedure
- g. Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy
- h. Local Code of Corporate Governance

The Council has in place Members' related codes of conduct and a Local Code of Corporate Governance. Both are deemed to remain fit for purpose, however slight improvements have been identified in respect of the Member code of conduct and these will be implemented. An agreed process is in place to deal with standards matters should they arise. The Standards Sub-Committee plays a significant role in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct between elected and co-opted

Members and hearing complaints where standards of behaviour fall short of what is expected. In particular the role of the Committee is:

- a) promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct by councillors and co-opted Members
- b) assisting the councillors and co-opted Members to observe the Members' Code of Conduct
- c) advising the Council on the adoption or revision of the Members' Code of Conduct
- d) monitoring the operation of the Members' Code of Conduct
- e) advising, training or arranging to train councillors and co-opted Members on matters relating to the Members' Code of Conduct
- f) granting dispensations to councillors and co-opted Members from requirements relating to interests set out in the Members' Code of Conduct
- g) to hear complaints locally regarding alleged breaches of the Code
- h) exercising such other functions as the Council considers appropriate; and
- i) the exercise of (a) to (g) above in relation to the town/parish councils/meetings and their Members in the Council's area

The Code of Conduct and the Standards regime form part of the Members' induction arrangements and all Members (new and returning) are required to sign the Code of Conduct and provide a new register of interest return.

There is a Code of Conduct for employees and there is also an induction process in place which includes conduct matters. There is an appraisal process in place for both Members and Officers which allows a development plan to be put in place.

The Council has an [Anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy](#) and also a [whistle blowing policy](#) in place. These are to be reviewed during 2016/17. Annual reports on fraud and whistle blowing incidents are presented to Members and are made available for review via the Council's web site.

There are registers of gifts and hospitality, interests, and secondary employment. During the year (and especially around Christmas and holiday periods) Members and staff are reminded of the procedure for registering gifts and hospitality and more senior staff are regularly reminded of the need to do this. Procedures for dealing with conflict of interest are in place. Arrangements are in place to ensure that Members and employees of the Council are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders.

Rules and procedures are set out in The Constitution including Members' Code of Conduct, Operation of the Standards Sub-Committee, Procedure Rules for Committees, Financial and Contract Procedure Rules (updated during 2015/16) and Scheme of Delegation.

The Monitoring Officer and Chief Finance Officer also have clear supporting roles.

Awareness of probity issues amongst managers is raised through regular reminders that are sent out to all staff.

The Council has an investigation and disciplinary process for conduct issues and action is taken against employees where conduct falls below that expected. At a Chief Officer level this function is undertaken by elected Members and there are clear rules of procedure defined in The Constitution.

5. The decision making framework

Objective: Reviewing the effectiveness of the authority's decision-making framework, including delegation arrangements, decision making in partnerships and robustness of data quality

The scheme of delegated and reserved powers is set out within The Constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for collective decision of the Council, taking account of relevant legislation. Attention is paid to ensure that arrangements reflect current structures and roles and support appropriate good decision making.

A Scrutiny Committee (Challenge & Improvement) is in place and has clear terms of reference. Their operation is covered in The Constitution.

The Council has a robust reporting process in place. There is a committee timetable and Democratic Services identify agendas with the services. The committee report template requires report authors to seek professional comment on proposals from finance and legal colleagues. It also prompts officers, where appropriate, to detail at least three options for consideration with a recommended option highlighted and to also consider legal, staffing and equalities matters and to assess risk.

The meetings of the Council have appropriate agendas, reports and minutes which demonstrate data quality. All Committees are web cast with the Planning Committee and Full Council meetings webcast live.

The Council uses training, workshops, ACoPs and manuals to help staff operate systems.

The Council has clear policy and guidance on managing risk and Members receive risk management training.

Four delivery boards are in place to manage the delivery of the Corporate Plan:

- **Entrepreneurial Board** – which focuses on the delivery of specific programmes of an entrepreneurial nature and oversees the work of the other three boards
- **Commercial Board** – delivery of the Council's commercial plan
- **Growth Board** – which leads on economic regeneration, housing and development management
- **Transformation Board** – which oversees the core governance processes required to support the Council in its business and programmes/projects which display transformational characteristics.

An internal audit undertaken in 2015/16 into our decision making processes, reported a substantial level of assurance. Its findings found that there are effective structures in place to support decision making, which have been updated and aligned to reflect changes in Councillor's through elections and management through restructuring and recruitment. Member committees have all been approved since the May 2015 elections, with membership, chairs and lead officers all agreed and documented. Staff survey results showed there is nearly 100% understanding of the committee process. The management leadership teams and project boards are established and regular meetings taking place. The Business Improvement Team provide corporate support and scrutiny on project management and progress reports.

Each board is chaired by a member of the GCLT and has specific terms of reference. A review of the effectiveness of the Boards has been undertaken during the year with recommendations made for incremental improvement.

Data quality contributes to the achievement of and underpins, the Council's priorities. The Council is committed to high standards of data quality and must take care to ensure that the data and information used throughout the organisation and particularly in relation to performance management is fit for purpose. In the recent past, the Council recognised the need to ensure a consistent approach to data quality and has therefore produced and communicated via workshops and meetings a [Data Quality Policy](#). In addition agreement has been reached with Internal Audit for them to explicitly assess and reference data quality (where relevant) as part of their audit work.

6. Risk Management

Objective: Reviewing the effectiveness of the framework for identifying and managing risks and demonstrating clear accountability

The Council has in place a [Risk Management Strategy](#) which was revised and approved during 2015/16. The accompanying ACoP, which supports the strategy to outline operational procedures and roles and responsibilities was similarly refreshed and communicated to colleagues.

A number of workshops with staff and GCLT have been held during the year to discuss risk and the Council has attended the Lincolnshire Risk Management Group meetings. Service risk management is a standing item of the Service Leadership Team (SLT) meeting agenda whereby any issues can be raised.

All risks are maintained on a central system which enables risk owners to identify risks at a service level. If any such risk escalates in nature there is a process on place by which it can be brought to the attention of GCLT.

The Strategic Risk register identifies risks to the delivery of the outcomes in the Corporate Plan. The register is reviewed quarterly by GCLT and on a six-monthly basis by the Governance and Audit Committee.

The Governance and Audit Committee have a responsibility as part of their terms of

reference for approving the Risk Strategy and maintain an overview of risks. The committee has appointed a Member Risk Champion who has clear terms of reference. During the course of the year the Committee received training from Internal Audit on the management of risks.

7. Counter-fraud and anti-corruption

Objective: Ensuring effective counter-fraud and anti-corruption arrangements are developed and maintained

The Council has an [Anti-Fraud, Corruption and Money Laundering Strategy](#) which stresses a zero tolerance approach and is part of a suite of policies covering:

- Whistleblowing Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Covert Surveillance Policy
- Codes of Conduct for Members and Officers
- Risk Management Policy and Strategy
- Gifts and Hospitality
- Standing Orders

The policy applies to:

- All West Lindsey District Council Employees.
- Councillors and Independent Members
- Staff and members of Council funded voluntary organisations
- Partners
- Suppliers, contractors and consultants
- Residents

Members of staff, partners and contractors have all been reminded of the policy and how to raise any concerns, or report suspected fraud or corruption, through a series of leaflets and posters and a 'Fighting Fraud' leaflet is distributed annually to all staff. An anti-fraud presentation forms part of the corporate induction process. During the year a workshop was held with Directors, Strategic Leads and Team Managers on the subject of potential fraud related risks the Council faces. This culminated in the production of a specific fraud related risk register for the Council.

The Governance and Audit Committee receive a yearly report on anti-fraud and corruption arrangements and action that has been taken to investigate and prosecute cases.

To monitor and manage the risk of fraud, the Council continues to retain an internal fraud capability. A programme of work has been developed supported by the Lincolnshire Fraud Partnership. The Council also takes part in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI); a bi-annual exercise that matches electronic data within and between public sector bodies to prevent and detect fraud.

8. Management of Change

Objective: Ensuring effective management of change and transformation

Governance arrangements are in place to ensure change is effectively managed in the form of Board scrutiny, effective project management and Progress and Delivery reporting against projects and programme development. Members are also part of this process and regular reports are produced to keep them updated.

A review of the Council's principles and processes in place to support effective project management has been undertaken with colleagues to ensure they remain fit for purpose. We are keen for the process to reach a greater level of maturity and intend to progress this through 2016/17.

Each Board has been assigned a Programme Manager to provide support to project managers and objective analysis of the progress and quality of project development and adherence to the Council's project management methodology.

Effective communication is regarded as crucial to delivering effective change and strong links have been forged between the relevant Boards and the Communications Team to ensure the Council as a whole is kept abreast of developments.

To provide strategic capacity and capability concerned with change and transformation, work has almost been completed in respect of the recruitment to Strategic Lead positions, whereby five are in post across the organisation, with one post remaining under consideration.

9. Role of the Chief Financial Officer

Objective: Ensuring the authority's financial management arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the [CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government \(2010\)](#) and, where they do not, explain why and how they deliver the same impact

The Council has designated the Director of Resources as the Chief Finance Officer under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. This officer has statutory responsibility for the proper planning, administration and monitoring of the Council's financial affairs. The Council's financial management arrangements also conform to the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010).

The financial management of the Council is conducted in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules set out in The Constitution. The financial management system includes:

- A five year Medium Term Financial Strategy which is reviewed and updated annually to support the delivery of the Council's strategic priorities
- An annual budget cycle incorporating Council approval for revenue and

- capital budgets as well as treasury management strategies
- Financial Procedure Rules that are reviewed at intervals of not more than three years. A refresh was undertaken and approved during 2015/16. Relevant amendments are made when required
 - Process and procedure guidance manuals
 - Regular budget monitoring by budget holders through monthly financial monitoring meetings and reports
 - Four reports per year to GCLT and Members relating to the Council's financial position stating financial and performance information
 - Annual accounts supporting stewardship responsibilities which are subjected to external audit and which follow the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the UK in line with International Financial Reporting Standards.

10. Role of the Head of Internal Audit

Objective: Ensuring the authority's assurance arrangements conform with the governance requirements of the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit (2010) and, where they do not, explain why and how they deliver the same impact

The [CIPFA statement on the Role of the Head of Internal Audit \(2010\)](#) states that the Head of Internal Audit in a public service organisation plays a critical role in delivering the organisation's strategic objectives by:

1. Championing best practice in governance, objectively assessing the adequacy of governance and management of existing risks, commenting on responses to emerging risks and proposed developments
2. Giving an objective and evidence based opinion on all aspects of governance, risk management and internal control

To perform this role the Head of Internal Audit:

3. Must be a senior manager with regular and open engagement across the organisation, particularly with the GCLT and with the Audit Committee
4. Must lead and direct an internal audit service that is resourced to be fit for purpose; and
5. Must be professionally qualified and suitably experienced

A review of the CIPFA statement has taken place and no matters of concern were identified. The Head of Internal Audit reports to the GCLT and the Governance & Audit Committee on a regular basis in relation to audit and governance related matters.

The Council has in place an Internal Audit Charter which defines the terms of reference for Internal Audit by setting out the nature, role, responsibilities and authority of the Internal Audit service within the Council.

The Constitution identifies that the Chief Finance Officer is responsible for providing an efficient and effective Internal Audit service, which will comply with relevant legislation and best auditing practice.

11. Role of the Monitoring Officer

Objective: Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the discharge of the monitoring officer function

The [Constitution](#) covers the key statutory role and functions of the Monitoring Officer. It also includes the requirement for the Council to ensure that the Monitoring Officer has access to sufficient skills and resources to undertake the role. The Monitoring Officer has confirmed that this is the case and he continues to review this. Appropriate training is delivered where needs are identified.

There is a specific job role which reflects the Monitoring Officer duties. The Monitoring Officer is line-managed by the Chief Executive who provides mentoring support. No conflict of interest in this line management structure has been identified.

12. Role of the Head of Paid Service

Objective: Ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the discharge of the head of paid service function

The statutory provisions are included in The [Constitution](#). The authority does not share its Chief Executive with other authorities.

The Leader and the Chief Executive have agreed corporate objectives and key priorities for the year. From that the Chief Executive has agreed with the Leader key work objectives for both the Chief Executive and Directors. Monitoring against progress is achieved via regular liaison between relevant parties.

13. The Audit Committee

Objective: Undertaking the core functions of an audit committee, as identified in CIPFA's Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities

The Council maintains and operates a Governance & Audit Committee which is independent of the Policy Committees and the scrutiny function. Membership includes up to three Independent Members. The Committee receives training and has a defined work plan. Substitutes are not permitted unless the substitute has undertaken specific audit committee training.

The core functions of the [Governance and Audit Committee](#) are set out in The Constitution. Terms of reference are in line with CIPFA guidance and the Committee

operates to these.

Some Audit Committee Members are also Members of the scrutiny committee. This arrangement has been agreed by Full Council.

14. Compliance with laws and regulations

Objective: Ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures, and that expenditure is lawful

The Constitution and relevant job descriptions outline Officer, Member, Committee and Council responsibilities.

Lincolnshire Legal Services hold a central library of all relevant legislation and are consulted when required. The Corporate Governance Team maintains a horizon scanning function which feeds into monthly horizon scanning reports to the GCLT, Strategic Leads and Team Managers. However, departments take responsibility for receiving and operating to new legislative responsibilities as they arise.

Where relevant expert legal advice procured to support decision making, particularly in relation to delivery of projects supporting the commercial plan.

Legislation and Statutory Instruments are dealt with and assessed as they are received (from a range of sources including national email alert systems). Changes in legislation have been implemented successfully with no major issues arising.

The communication of local policies and procedures is embedded in a number of different ways such as SLT meetings and workshops, team briefings and local training. Officers ensure that they are aware of and comply with laws and regulations which are relevant to their roles.

The Council pays close attention to requirements relating to Information Governance and we have provided expertise and support in this area for neighbouring authorities during 2015/16. Training/workshops have been delivered for staff and the ability to provide on-line training will be enhanced following the purchase of a corporate training platform. Best practice has been followed with the nomination of officers to the roles of Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO) and Senior Information Governance Officer (SIGO). The Corporate Information Governance Group meets regularly to review information governance related matters and developments and we propose to critically review our processes during 2016/17 to ensure they are as robust as possible and awareness is evident across the Council.

The Council's statutory officers are the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), the Section 151 Officer (Director of Resources) and the Monitoring Officer (Strategic Lead for Democracy and Business Support). These officers are responsible for ensuring that the Council acts within the law and in accordance with established policy and procedure.

Counsel opinion may be obtained in certain circumstances and unusual transactions are referred to the External Auditor for consideration.

The Section 151 Officer is specifically responsible for the proper discharge of the Council's financial arrangements and must advise elected Members where expenditure is likely to exceed resources.

Where any proposal is unlawful, the Section 151 Officer, jointly with the Monitoring Officer, have a duty (should such a scenario arise) to produce a 'Section Five' report and inform the Head of Paid Service and External Audit.

The Chief Executive and Directors carry responsibility for ensuring that legislation and policy relating to service delivery and health and safety are implemented. A disciplinary process is in place for both staff and Members for any breaches.

The Governance and Audit Committee receive reports by Internal Audit which include review of compliance with legislation. This provides the Committee with an overview of compliance with policy and procedures and it can request attendance of managers to provide further assurance.

15. Whistleblowing arrangements

Objective: Arrangements for whistle blowing and for receiving and investigating complaints from the public

The Council has in place a [whistle blowing policy](#) which is available for reference via the Council's web site and internal intranet and its existence and content is regularly communicated to staff. The Council also works in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council and fellow Lincolnshire authorities to develop and produce a County-wide, 'Fighting Fraud' leaflet which is distributed to staff.

The Council also has in place a customer complaints, compliments and comments procedure. The [procedure](#) is available for view on the intranet and web site. When complaints are received an internal independent officer is appointed to investigate and in certain circumstances an external appointment may be made. One of the key aspects of the policy is our desire to learn from complaints to rectify matters if required. Where appropriate, complaints that have been referred to the Ombudsman are brought to the attention of GCLT. Annual reports are presented to the Governance & Audit Committee on whistleblowing and more general customer feedback.

16. Member and Officer Development

Objective: Identifying the development needs of Members and senior officers in relation to their strategic roles, supported by appropriate training

An updated [Member Development Plan](#) has been approved which will oversee the training and development requirements of the current administration. The plan was compiled from a number of sources:

- Requirements from The Constitution
- Areas for development recommended for each committee
- Feedback from Members
- Areas of interest
- Changes to the local government environment including legislation

Following elections in May 2015, Members received a comprehensive induction programme which was well received. Member training is also recorded to keep track of the training delivered and details of Member attendance. During the year, Members have received training on such matters as Treasury Management Strategy Scrutiny; Statement of Accounts Scrutiny; Risk Management, the Role of the G&A Committee, Fraud Awareness and development management related topics.

Staff surveys are undertaken on an annual basis and the content is used to develop appropriate training. Additionally the Council currently holds Investors in People accreditation. During 2015/16 a People Strategy was approved and a range of actions are being worked through to address issues. This will be supported by a newly formed Staff Engagement Group drawn from staff across the Council.

To improve the ability of managers with line management responsibility to fulfil their roles more effectively, the HR team have held a series of drop-in workshops where staff can raise issues and seek advice and guidance.

The Corporate Plan is communicated to staff and forms the golden thread for staff appraisals and work objectives for the forthcoming year and associated training needs. In 2016/17 work will focus on rolling out a recently purchased learning and development tool which will help support corporate training in the future.

17. Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Objective: Establishing clear channels of communication with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, ensuring accountability and encouraging open consultation

The Council meets its statutory responsibilities with regard to engagement on budget setting by holding events with residents, parishes and businesses. The Council uses a variety of channels to communicate with the community and stakeholders for example:

- West Lindsey Citizen Panel through surveys and focus groups
- West Lindsey District Council website
- Focus groups with residents and local businesses
- E-surveys
- Local press
- West Lindsey section of County News
- Summits
- Social media

The Council consults on key service changes and issues that may affect residents of the District. Events undertaken during 2015/16 were:

- Budget events and surveys with West Lindsey businesses and the Citizen Panel
- Citizen Panel Surveys on: waste collection service, social media, Local Council Tax Support Scheme, green waste collection and CCTV provision.
- Public Space Protection Order in Gainsborough
- Local Plan consultation

During the year we also undertook surveys with service users (whether they are internal or external to the Council) to ascertain the levels of satisfaction of services. Results are used to develop our services to ensure they are delivering the level of service required by users. The Council also contributes to Lincolnshire County Council's "County News" and uses social media.

The Council actively supports the Community Right to Bid initiative. During the year a number of applications from community groups have been received and considered with decisions fed back.

During 2015/16, the Council implemented a new website with improved functionality to enhance our means of communication. Complementary to this is the Council's e-accessibility project, which seeks to transfer those customers who are willing and able, to more accessible and convenient methods of engaging with the Council. This project gained significant traction in 2015/16 and is on-going into the coming year.

The Council has reviewed its Localism programme. This was in place for a number of years and a re-visit of original objectives was required to ascertain successes and whether a different approach was required to meet any, as yet unmet, or new objectives.

18. Partnership Governance

Objective: Enhancing the accountability for service delivery and effectiveness of other public service providers incorporating good governance arrangements in respect of partnerships and other joint working as identified by the Audit Commission's report on the governance of partnerships, and reflecting these in the authority's overall governance arrangements.

To enhance the accountability for service delivery and effectiveness of other public service providers, the Challenge and Improvement Committee have continued with their programme of holding meetings with strategic partners to discuss their approach to addressing the strategic needs of the residents of the District. Meetings held during the year have seen ACIS (RSL), Lincolnshire West CCG and the Police attend to present overviews of their work; the impact it is having on the general well-being of the District and the issues they face. A further programme of work for the Committee for 2016/17 has been developed.

During the course of the year, the Home Choices Service commissioned an audit into the arrangements relating to the Choice Based Lettings partnership arrangements. This highlighted known issues and a comprehensive action plan has been developed to improve matters. Progress against the plan will be closely tracked during 2016/17 to ensure the service is able to meet the needs of its customers more

effectively.

Ensuring the effectiveness of partnership working has continued during the year. Working in accordance with the Partnership ACoP, on-going population and maintenance of the Council's partnership register has been undertaken and workshops have been held with service areas to discuss their partnership working arrangements. In conducting this work, reference is paid to the Audit Commission's ['Governing Partnerships'](#) Report. Financial implications of partnership working are considered to ensure value for money is achieved and the required accounting assessments are undertaken to ensure appropriate accounting treatment.

Our current contract procedure rules cover contract monitoring procedures and management of delivery. These were revised during 2015/16 in light of legislative changes. The accountability of service providers is managed through contract management and work has been undertaken to ensure The Council has robust contract management procedures in place.

Issue	Description	Action	Current Position	Date Due	Officer	BRAG
Strategic & Spatial Planning	Upon completion of the Local Plan and in light of the Greater Lincolnshire focus on strategic and spatial planning, we need to ensure West Lindsey's growth needs and strategic planning duties are understood and addressed to include duty to co-operate with all relevant strategic planning areas including all Nottinghamshire authorities	To undertake review of future options and develop a strategy for delivery	1. Central Lincolnshire Local Plan submitted for examination 2. Public Consultation period commenced	31/12/2016	M. Sturgess	Green
Development Management	To ensure issues relating to capacity; performance and customer care are addressed and sustainable improvements are realised	1. Ensure adequate capacity and skills within the service 2. Ensure performance reporting is robust and reliable 3. External independent assessment of performance reporting is provided 4. Deliver measurable and sustainable improvements in customer care	1. Team Manager appointed and steps in place to recruit performance manager 2. Further independent audit to be undertaken by Internal Audit 3. Performance measures in place and scrutiny and review processes in place	31/07/2017	M. Sturgess	Green
Strategic Programme Delivery	An extensive capital programme has been agreed and we therefore need to ensure that robust and appropriate governance arrangements are	1. Establish regular monitoring via Entrepreneurial Board.	1. Entrepreneurial Board in place 2. Progress & Delivery and Quarterly Finance	31/07/2017	I. Knowles	Green

	implemented to oversee its delivery and financial management governance and other strategic considerations e.g. stakeholder engagement are adequate to support complex change	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Report to Members via Quarterly Finance Monitoring reports 3. Ensure each project follows the project management framework 4. Exception reporting through Progress & Delivery reports of projects not performing as expected 5. Annual review as part of year end closedown 	<p>Monitoring reports in place.</p> <p>3. Project methodology in place and adherence monitored.</p>			
Information Governance & Security	To ensure that appropriate controls and polices are in place to provide on-going mitigation for the Council against the risk of cyber-crime and/or data/information leakage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement revised Information Governance Strategy 2. Refresh Information Security Policy 3. Develop and deliver training programme 4. Achieve PSN compliance 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strategy drafted 2. Work underway to revise Security Policy with supporting processes 3. DPA training underway. Further elements planned. 4. PSN work planned for 2016/17 	31/07/2017	I. Knowles	Green
Intelligent Clienting	To address the recognised issues across the CBL partnership and develop improved processes for customers and to review similar areas where good practice exists and apply learning to similar circumstances across the organisation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve effectiveness of nominations through CBL 2. Improve effectiveness of CBL partnership 3. Address issues relating to the CBL IT system 4. Strengthen CBL related contractual arrangements 5. Formalise CBL recharge arrangements 6. Improve quality of Housing register data 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weekly monitoring in place undertaken by a post jointly funded by ACIS. 2. Review underway of ToR of CBL partnership using guidance set out in WLDC ACoP. 3. Legal requirements of CBL partnership under review. 4. IT system rebuilt and in test phase. Alternative 	31/07/2017	M. Sturgess	Green

		7. Formalise Housing Register related performance monitoring 8. Introduce Nominations and CBL Performance Monitoring	arrangements also being explored. 5. Sampling of case data undertaken by monitoring officer. 6. Performance measures regularised and monitoring process in place			
Selective Licensing	To review the implementation, monitoring and initial performance of the selective licensing project in the Gainsborough South West Ward	1. To deliver a selective licensing scheme in the SWW of Gainsborough	1. Scheme to be implemented from 18/7/16 2. Communication with landlords underway 3. Enforcement to commence from 1/1/17	31/07/2017	M. Sturgess	Green

AGS 2014/15 Action Plan

Title	Description	Action	Current Position	Date Due	Officer	BRAG	Revised Date
Central Lincolnshire Local Plan	To oversee the completion of the Local Plan by end of 2016 and ensure that West Lindsey's growth needs are considered and addressed through working with partners on the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee	To work with officers of the partner councils to - Identify the evidence base needed to support the preparation of the local plan. Review the proposed policies to ensure that the evidence supports the policy and that the policy meets the development needs of West Lindsey in terms of delivering housing, jobs, economic growth and a quality environment. Hold the partners to account to ensure that the local plan is adopted by the end of 2016 The council will also play its part in ensuring that the residents of West Lindsey are engaged in the production of the local plan and the views of West Lindsey District Council are communicated to the Central Lincolnshire Joint Strategic Planning Committee at each formal consultation stage in the process of preparing the local plan.	The local plan has currently been considered through two stages of public engagement and the council has made comments at each stage. At the Further Draft Stage (November 2015) the council supported the local plan as helping to facilitate the growth of homes, jobs, economic development and the delivery of a quality environment the District required. The plan has now been approved to proceed to the submission draft consultation stage which will start in April 2016 and lead to the Examination in Public in September 2016.	31/12/2016	Mark Sturgess	Green	
Review of Risk Strategy	To ensure it is aligned with new structures within the Council	1. Prepare draft strategy 2. Review of strategy by CLT/Internal Audit 3. Staff workshop held 4. Strategy presented to G&A Cttee and approved	1. Draft strategy produced 2. Strategy reviewed by Internal Audit & Member Risk Champion 3. Staff workshop held on 25th November 2015 4. Strategy reviewed by CLT December 2015 5. Strategy due at G&A Cttee 19th Jan 2016 6. Strategy approved at G&A Cttee on 19th Jan 2016	31/01/2016	Ian Knowles	Black	
Development Management Improvement	To systematically improve the performance of the development management service so that: It is outcomes focused and recognises its role on delivering the objectives of both the Corporate Plan and Local Plan. Puts the customer first in the way it operates and streamlines systems and processes so that they focus on the delivery of decisions on planning applications at the point the decision is ready to be issued. Ensures that its staff are trained and led in a way that allows them to focus on delivery of their objectives. Costs are identified and that staff understand the overall costs of delivering the service as well as the unit costs involved in processing individual planning applications. Performance is visible across the service - from the performance of individual officers, to the performance of the team as a whole and in comparison to other development management services (bench marking). It takes account of the political environment and the requirements of elected Members. It has a fit for purpose ICT system that is capable of supporting the delivery of that outlined above.	Establishment of a cross council development management improvement group. Peer Challenge commissioned & completed. Draft Improvement Plan to be produced.	Findings of Peer review received and reviewed. Draft Improvement plan to be considered in CLT on 14 December 2015. Draft Improvement plan to be considered by C&I Committee in early 2016. Recruitment of Team Manager underway. Improvement programme being developed. Quick wins implemented. Phones open. Electronic application files. Individual elected members notified about applications in their wards. Member training programme agreed (first session delivered). Agents' Forum re-established (first one held). Performance across arrange of indicators is improving. Member training programme has been agreed and is being implemented (including joint training with parish councils in line with a recommendation from the peer challenge). Team Manager post has been advertised twice and it has not been possible to recruit a suitable person - alternative solutions are now being looked at. The process for the selection of a new ICT system is still underway.	31/03/2016	Mark Sturgess	Green	31/08/2016
Review of constitution and streamlining of deci	To ensure it supports new structures, governance and decision making frameworks; supports commercial aspirations and identifies and removes unnecessary bureaucracy	Review Constitution Implement any actions from audit into Effective Decision Making	Constitution reviewed and reflects requirements of the Council. Decision making has been audited and a finding of 'substantial assurance' achieved. A small number of identified actions have been worked through.	31/05/2016	Alan Robinson	Black	

Corporate Plan 2016-2020	New Plan to be produced to reflect changing issues facing the District and the priorities of the new Administration	#VALUE!	1. Priorities identified by Members. 2. Workshops held with Strategic Leads/Directors to identify required actions 3. Draft of priorities, actions and outcomes fed back to Leader and Deputy Leader 4. Draft Plan presented to CLT, LP, PC and CPR Committees. Due at Full Council on 3rd March 2016 5. Plan approved by Council on 3rd March 2016	31/03/2016 Ian Knowles	Black	
Delivery of Finance Matters 2	To design and implement a further finance related training programme to further develop staff in line with the Council's commercial and entrepreneurial ambitions	1. Design training programme and method of delivery 2. Roll-out training to relevant colleagues 3. Evaluate feedback and outcomes	Capacity issues have delayed progress but service now at full complement Content and design of training programme in development. Programme developed and timelined and approved by Transformation Board. Will be delivered over the next 12 months.	31/01/2016 Ian Knowles	Black	30/07/2016
Member induction and development	To ensure an effective democratic framework and appropriate skills on the part of newly elected and returning Members	Develop appropriate induction programme and evaluate. Create a development programme for Members that meets all identified needs. G&A to agree development programme. Development Programme to commence.	Induction programme completed and evaluated with positive feedback. Member training needs assessment being collated. Draft report prepared for G&A Cttee in April 2016. Member Development Plan approved and commenced	31/12/2015 Alan Robinson	Black	30/07/2016
Contract Management	To ensure we have a functional database upon which to record all contract related information and documentation and that contract management is regarded by relevant officers as an essential component of day to day management duties	1. Feedback contents of Contract Mgt Audit report to SLT 2. Arrange one to one sessions with contract owners to populate contract register and add associated documentation 3. Liaise with Procurement Lincs re CPR revisions and update our CPRs 4. Express our requirements of the contract database and establish whether current provider can meet these 5. Prepare for follow-up audit	1. Contract database can meet our requirements and provider is updating functionality 2. One to one meetings on-going with contract owners leading to greater quality of contract related documentation 3. Advice obtained from Procurement Lincs re CPR revisions and feedback to CLT to inform our own arrangements. CPRs presented to G&A Committee for approval Jan 2016 4. CPRs updated and revised ACoP presented to SLT 17th Feb 2016 5. Follow-up audit commenced 22nd Feb 2016 6. Follow-up audit has reported that significant and relevant action has been undertaken to improve the previous situation and a substantial assurance rating has been provided.	31/03/2016 Ian Knowles	Black	
Asset Management	To produce a relevant and effective Asset Management Plan for WLDC	1. To obtain approval for WLDC's Property & Land Management Strategy	1. Approval obtained from Corporate Policy & Resources Committee in September 2015 for the Council's Property & Land Management Strategy	30/06/2016 Penny Sharp	Black	

Governance and Audit Committee Work Plan

Purpose:

This report provides a summary of reports that are due on the Forward Plan over the next 12 months for the Governance and Audit Committee.

Recommendation:

1. That members note the schedule of reports.

Governance and Audit			
Active/Closed	Active		
Date	Title	Lead Officer	Purpose of the report
15/09/2016	Audited Statement of Accounts	Tracey Bircumshaw	To present the audited statement of accounts for approval
	Members Allowances	Alan Robinson	Discussion item to inform the work of the Independent Remuneration Panel prior to their recommendations to Council
	ISA 260	Tracey Bircumshaw	For KPMG (External Auditor) to present their report in relation to the Statement of Accounts for 2015-16
	Member Champions	Alan Robinson	To formalise the role of Member Champions for the Constitution
08/11/2016	Annual Audit Letter	Tracey Bircumshaw	To present the Annual Audit Letter - KPMG External Audit
	AGS 15/16 Monitoring Report Q1	James O'Shaughnessy	To assess progress against the agreed AGS action plan at the end of quarter 1
	Internal Audit Plan Q2	Ian Knowles	To present progress against the agreed internal audit plan up until the end of period 2 extract from mins of mtg 21/6 Referring to Appendix 4, the continuous improvement plan for the Audit Lincolnshire service, Independent Members enquired as to how they as a Committee sought assurance the plan was being delivered. It was stressed that Audit Lincolnshire was a service provided by the County Council and as such its service improvement plan would be held to account by Mangers at the County Council. However if the Committee were minded, Officers would request that it be submitted in six months time alongside the internal audit plan progress report. The Committee welcomed this suggestion. it is therefore requested that this report includes an update improvement plan for Audit Lincolnshire
	Quickline Monitoring Report Q2	Tracey Bircumshaw	Exempt monitoring report assessing progress against the agreed business loan
	Strategic Risks - 6 month Update	James O'Shaughnessy	to present the 6 month update
17/01/2017	Treasury Management Draft Strategy	Tracey Bircumshaw	To present the draft strategy for scrutiny purposes
	Internal Audit Plan Q3	Ian Knowles	To present progress against the agreed internal audit plan up until the end of period 3
	Quickline Monitoring Q3	Tracey Bircumshaw	Exempt monitoring report to assess progress against the agreed business loan
14/03/2017	Certification of Grants and Claims	Tracey Bircumshaw	For External Audit to present the Certification of Grants and Claims
	Combined Assurance Report 2016/17	James O'Shaughnessy	To present the Combined Assurance Report
18/04/2017	Quickline Monitoring Q4	Tracey Bircumshaw	Exempt monitoring report to assess progress against the agreed loan as the end of period 4
	Constitution Annual Review	Alan Robinson	To present the Annual Review of the Constitution
	Strategic Risks - 6 month Update	James O'Shaughnessy	to present the 6 monthly update
20/06/2017	Member Training update	Alan Robinson	To present an update on the Member development programme
Grand Total			

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