



| | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Version Control: | |
| Document Name: | Annual Governance Statement 2021 |
| Version: | Version 1 |
| Author: | Corporate Support Manager |
| Approved by: | Audit and Governance Committee |
| Date Approved: | |
| Review Date: | June 2022 |

Annual Governance Statement – 2020-2021

Scope and Responsibility

Barrow Borough Council is responsible for delivering a wide range of statutory and discretionary services to the public and organisations in the area of the Borough. The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to 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, the Council has put in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs and facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

Governance

Governance comprises the arrangements put in place to ensure that the intended outcomes for stakeholders are defined and achieved.

The Council's Governance Framework

Effective governance in the public sector encourages improved decision making and efficient use of resources. Effective governance is characterised by robust scrutiny, which provides important pressures for improving public sector performance and tackling corruption. Effective governance can improve management and lead to better service delivery, and, ultimately, better outcomes.

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes for the direction and control of the Council and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the Council to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost-effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of the governance framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable and proportionate 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 Barrow Borough Council's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the

likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The Principles of Good Governance and the Governance Framework is aligned to the CIPFA/SOLACE framework Delivering Good Governance in Local Government which sets out seven core principles of good governance, these are:

A. Behaving with integrity, demonstrating a strong commitment to ethical values, and respecting the rule of law.

- The Council's constitution defines the roles and responsibilities of the Council's decision making, regulatory, Audit and Governance and Overview and Scrutiny committees. It also defines the roles of the statutory officers and includes the delegations that officers hold.
- Members and officers have an induction which set includes the behaviours that are expected.
- The Council's values and behaviours was rolled out to all staff and Members during 2020-21.
- A fraud hotline is in place to allow confidential reporting so that anonymous complaints can be investigated.

B. Ensuring openness and comprehensive stakeholder engagement.

- There is a process for consultation in place and a number of consultations were carried out in 2020/21.
- The Council has engaged a Social Media and Public Relations provider to positively project the Barrow Borough Council brand and attain a stronger reach to customers. This will be developed through a revised Communications Strategy
- The Council is developing its website to provide a key means of communication in an open and transparent way.
- We provide clear recommendations to the decision making committees, this is by supported reasoning and evidence. We assess the financial, legal, health, social, economic environmental and implications as well risks relating to those decisions and provide Members with the outputs from those assessments.

C. Defining outcomes in terms of sustainable economic, social and environmental benefits.

- The Council published its plan for 2020- 2024 and has identified three priority areas.
- We are developing service plans to ensure we deliver the priorities agreed in the Council Plan
- The Council was successful in applying for Town Deal funding for regeneration.

- The Council has developed ambitious plans to regenerate part of Barrow town centre and submitted to the Government's Levelling Up Fund.
- D. Determining the interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of intended outcomes.
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy is reviewed annually
 - The council is developing service plans to ensure we deliver the priorities agreed in the Council Plan
 - The Council supports and encourages staff to undertake professional training.
 - The Council has an effective Member training programme in place
 - Staff have regular briefings with senior management.
- E. Managing risks and performance through robust internal control and strong public financial management.
- The Council has a risk policy which reviewed regularly by Management Team and is approved by the Executive Committee.
 - The Council has corporate and operational risk registers which are reviewed regularly by Management team and the Audit and Governance Committee.
- F. Implementing good practices in transparency, reporting and audit to deliver effective accountability.
- The Audit and Governance Committee has defined roles which are set out in the Council's Constitution.
 - External auditors routinely attend Audit and Governance Committee meetings.
 - The Head of Internal Audit has access to the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee.
 - Members are asked to declare any interests at the beginning of every committee meeting.

Review of Effectiveness

Barrow Borough 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 of effectiveness is informed by the work of the senior managers within the Council who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of

Internal Audit's annual report, and also by comments made by the appointed auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

A Management Team consisting of the following Officers were involved in reviewing this draft Annual Governance Statement

- Chief Executive - Head of Paid Services
- Director of Resources - S151 Officer
- Director of People and Place
- Assistant Director - Housing
- Head of Legal and Governance - Monitoring Officer
- Head of Internal Audit

The Council has assessed itself against the principles of good governance that are defined in the Local Code of Corporate Governance.

In order to demonstrate that the existing governance and control arrangements are fit for purpose and are complied with, Corporate Support undertake reviews of individual departments.

To support the self assessment we reviewed the source documents recommended in the CIPFA guidance schedule and identified additional evidence to demonstrate compliance with the supporting principals of good governance.

In 2020 the Council invited the Local Government Association to undertake a Corporate Peer review and has developed plans to deliver the recommendations from the review.

The Constitution

The Borough of Barrow-in-Furness has updated and agreed a [Constitution](#) which sets out how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures, which are followed to ensure that these are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.

Some of these processes are required by the law, while others are a matter for the Council to choose and set out the basic rules governing the Council's business.

The Constitution is regularly reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose. The review in 2020 considered delegation and procedural arrangements and also had regard to the recommendations of the Local Government Association Governance Review. Changes have also been made to address the implications brought about by the Coronavirus Pandemic, e.g. virtual meetings, when decision making was further reviewed and a Virtual Meetings Rules and Protocol was adopted.

The Monitoring Officer undertakes an annual review, and this was last reported to Council in March 2021. The Constitution sets out the Council's ethical standards for Elected Members and Officers.

We have reviewed and adopted formal codes of conduct defining standards of personal behaviour for Members and Officers. The Monitoring Officer monitors compliance with the Member's code of conduct. The Members code was reviewed in September 2020 taking account of best practice recommendations arising from the Committee on Standards in Public Life following their report on Local Government Ethical Standards which was published in January 2019. Revised Standards Arrangements were also adopted in March 2021.

The Chief Executive (Head of Paid Services) has overall responsibility for ensuring compliance with the officer's code of conduct.

We have put in place effective systems to protect the rights of staff. We ensure that policies for whistle-blowing are accessible to staff and those contracting with the Council, and arrangements for the support of whistle-blowers, are in place.

The Constitution includes the Council's Contract Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, committee structure, delegation powers and how the Council operates.

The Section 151 Officer is responsible to the Council for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal control.

The Council takes a longer term view and publishes plans so the public are aware of our intended outcomes. This information can be found published in documents including the Council's Priorities and the Council Plan.

The Council has prepared and published a plan which sets out the Council's priorities and a Medium Term Financial Plan which is a financial representation of the Council's Vision and supports the priorities.

The Council will enable the Chief Financial Officer to bring influence to bear on all material decisions and provide advice on the levels of reserves and balances to be retained. The Chief Financial Officer has responsibility for ensuring compliance with relevant laws and regulations, internal policies and procedures, and that expenditure is lawful.

Decision making process

The Council Plan

The [Council Plan](#) is a strategic document under which the Council's other policy framework documents sit. It communicates the Council's Vision which

specifies intended outcomes for the period from 2020 - 2024. The plan details how the Council will achieve the priorities. The Council plan will be supported by service plans which reflect the Council's priorities.

Unless delegated to Officers, Council decisions are made by a Committee acting under delegated powers or by Full Council. All meetings are open to the public unless exempt information is being discussed and we attempt to publish all committee agenda items under "Part 1" unless there is the need to preserve confidentiality where it is proper and appropriate to do so.

The Council will develop and retain a management structure that provides leadership and creates the opportunity for staff to work effectively and efficiently to achieve the Council objectives. We will provide training and support to enable staff to develop their skills so they can achieve their full potential. We will develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when external expert advice is needed. We will ensure that the statutory officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the Council.

Members are provided with financial and performance reports on a regular basis which demonstrates how the Council achieves value for money.

Agendas, reports and minutes for all Council meetings are published on the Council's website. [Committee Reports and Minutes](#)

Customer engagement

We strive to engage with stakeholders on an individual and collective basis to demonstrate that we deliver services and outcomes which meet the needs and expectations of the public. These arrangements will recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish robust processes for dealing with these competing demands.

Barrow Borough Council welcomes and encourages attendance and contributions by the public at its meetings. Public participation guidelines were agreed by Council in June 2020 as part of the Council's commitment to community governance and openness.

The Council has recently developed an ambitious customer service strategy which defines how we will engage with customers and other stakeholders and involve them in improving our services.

Partnership working

The Council participates in formal and informal partnerships to allow for resources to be used more efficiently and outcomes to be achieved more effectively. The Council is actively involved in partnership boards that deliver key improvements to the Borough.

We contribute to and support initiatives that benefit the residents and businesses in the Borough. We ensure that partnerships are based on trust, a shared commitment to change and a culture that promotes and accepts challenge among partners.

When supporting stakeholder relationships we are clear about the Terms of Reference and clearly define our role. Our arrangements will recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities and establish robust processes for dealing with these competing demands.

Managing risk

The Council recognises that risk management is an integral part of all activities and must be considered in all aspects of decision making. We have risk management arrangements in place including mitigating actions to support the achievement of the Council's intended outcomes. We work with our contractors to understand our shared risks. We ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the Council, with Members and managers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their job.

Managing performance

The Council's performance management arrangements outline the approach taken to recovery planning and service performance for this year. The Executive Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will receive a monitoring report showing progress against priority actions and level of service delivery every six months.

The Council produces a number of strategies and policies to ensure we comply with our responsibilities in terms of Use of Resources and Value for Money; these are published on the Council's website. [Corporate Documents](#)

Managing data

The Council undertook a review of data management in preparation for the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation which has delivered improvements to internal controls to facilitate compliance with the regulation.

The Council has made significant investment in the IT infrastructure to minimise the loss of data through cyber attacks.

Governance arrangements and internal control

Audit and Governance Committee

We maintain the Audit and Governance Committee to raise awareness and take the lead in ensuring high standards of conduct are embedded within the Council's culture. The governance function of the Audit and Governance Committee includes:

- Consider reports and opinion of the internal audit function.
- Consider specific reports from internal audit and ensure agreed recommendations are implemented in a reasonable time frame.
- Consider reports and opinion of the appointed auditor.
- Monitor the risk management process.
- Monitor the Councils policies on the anti-fraud and anti-corruption strategy which are detailed in the Code of Governance.

Additional corporate assurance arrangements for 2020/21 include:

A review of the terms of reference of the Audit Committee was undertaken early in 2020 following which the name of the Committee was changed to Audit and Governance Committee to reflect the incorporation of the standards and governance arrangements and the terms of reference amended to reflect these and the delegations to the Monitoring Officer.

The Council publishes an Annual Governance Statement, signed by the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Audit Committee to confirm that they are satisfied that we have effective governance arrangements in place.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Council operates with a single Overview and Scrutiny Committee which can challenge a decision by the Executive Committee prior to it being implemented. It has a remit, which allows them to assist the Council and the Executive in the development of its budget and policy framework.

Members of the Scrutiny Committee are offered formal training by an external provider.

Internal Audit

The internal audit function develops an annual audit plan which is risk based and it is agreed by the Director of Resources and the Audit and Governance Committee. The audit plan provides a structured approach to reviewing internal control arrangements.

Based on the Plan, Internal Audit provides specific reports and recommendations. It also provides an Annual Report on the internal control arrangements which includes an audit opinion in support of the Council's Annual Governance Statement as required under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. The opinion is derived from work carried out by Internal Audit during the year as part of the agreed Internal Audit Plan.

Head of Internal Audit Annual Opinion Statement

This opinion statement is provided in support of the Council's Annual Governance Statement as required under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

The opinion is derived from work carried out by Internal Audit during the year as part of the agreed Internal Audit Plan. The Plan for 2019/20 was developed to primarily provide management with independent assurance on the adequacy and effectiveness of the internal control environment.

The PSIAS state that the internal control environment comprises three key areas: internal control, governance and risk management processes. My opinion on the effectiveness of the internal control environment is based on an assessment of each of these key areas.

As referred to above, there is a requirement for the "system of Internal Control" to include an assessment of sources of assurance, beyond just that of Internal Audit itself. As the Council is required to produce an Annual Governance Statement, sources of assurance are reflected and reviewed within this process, which Internal Audit are a part of; therefore the control environment is reviewed more fully in this way.

2020/21 Year Opinion

This report cannot provide reasonable assurance that the organisation's framework of governance, risk management and control predominantly operated satisfactorily during 2020/21 due to the restrictions and limitations of the coronavirus pandemic.

Conversely, I do not have evidence to confirm significant deviation from the control arrangements occurred.

My detailed opinion is that, for the minimal systems reviewed, the Council has reasonable systems of control in place, although there are significant weaknesses which put some of the system objectives at risk.

There are, however, areas where only Restricted Assurance can be provided, which relate to the following final reports:

Covid Risk Assessment – Post Assurance Review (Draft);
IT Procedures Review.

Weaknesses found as a result of our work, together with our recommendations for improvement, have been included in our reports to senior management and Members. Additionally, any weaknesses identified through the Annual Governance Statement process are recorded separately and reflect the assurance provided from all sources both internal and external.

Co-operation

The successful achievement of the audit plan is dependent on the contribution of the

Internal Audit resource and the Council's staff as audit clients. I would like to record my appreciation for the involvement and commitment of staff, and for their critical appraisal of our recommendations during the year. I would also

like to acknowledge the support shown by the Audit Committee in the delivery of our Plan.

Head of internal Audit's opinion statement for 2019/20 identified a number of weaknesses in internal control. The Council has produced an action plan to address these issues raised in the table below

Maritime Streets Landscaping Design.

The Council accepts the Contract Management Checklist did not deliver the desired outcome for this project. Remedial action will not resolve this position but will improve future contract management. The Council has sort an alternative method for tendering and awarding contracts.

| Action | Responsible officer | Completion Date |
|--|---------------------|--|
| The Contract Management Checklist will be replaced by a Project management approach to ensuring the all documentation is place at each stage of future contract processes. The Council has engaged external support from another Local Authority and the private sector to deliver training and provide guidance to ensure this is delivered effectively | Management Team | Training sessions by an external provider were rolled out to Management Group. The Council is continuing to develop its project management approach. |
| The project Management approach will involve robust cost analysis prior to the start of the contract. There will be regular update meetings with the project team to address significant deviation from the initial costs. | Project Team | On-going throughout the project |

Procurement

Payments without contract, there is an historic Grounds Maintenance contract from 2001 which has been rolled over. The Council accepts that the contract should have been renewed.

| Action | Responsible officer | Completion Date |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| A new contract is being prepared for seasonal baskets but this was not completed by the December 31 st implementation date | Grounds Maintenance Contract Manager | October 2021 |

| | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|
| because the resource was diverted to other activities. This has been extended for another season to allow planting for the spring/summer baskets and summer barrier baskets until the end of Sept. This was approved by the Executive Committee in November 2020. | | |
| Grounds Maintenance -this was extended and now includes playgrounds. The extension was signed in 2019 until 31 st May 2024. | Grounds Maintenance Contract Manager | Complete |
| The Public Conveniences and Stairwell cleansing was retendered in 2020 and awarded for two years. | Director of People and Place | Complete |
| The catering contract has been subject to a number of reviews, partly because the impact of Covid on the hospitality industry. A new catering contract has now been completed. | Director of People and Place | Complete |
| Establish a service driven contract monitoring group to ensure contracts including formally extending contracts and retendering managed in line with the Council's Contract Standing orders. | Assistant Directors | This was established but will be subsumed into a wider initiative to improve the contract process. The Head of Legal and Governance will have some oversight of this process. |

Cavendish Park changing rooms.

The Council accepts that there were a number of Contract related issues associated with this project. The project was completed in 2017/18 so remedial action will not resolve this position. The Council will improve future contract management and has sort an alternative method for tendering and awarding contracts.

| Action | Responsible officer | Completion Date |
|--|---------------------|---|
| The Contract Management Checklist will be replaced by a Project management approach to ensuring the all documentation is place at each stage of future contract processes. The Council has engaged external support from another Local Authority and the private sector to deliver training and provide guidance to ensure this is delivered effectively | Management Team | Project management approach is continuing to be developed. The contract checklist will remain in place. |
| The project Management approach will involve robust cost analysis prior to the start of the contract. There will be regular update meetings with the project team to address significant deviation from the initial costs. | Project Team | On-going throughout the project |

Refuse Collection, Recycling and Street Cleaning 2017-2024.

The Council accepts that there were a number of Contract related issues. Remedial action will not resolve this position but will improve future contract management. The Council will improve future contract management and has sort an alternative method for tendering and awarding contracts.

| Action | Responsible officer | Completion Date |
|--|---------------------|---|
| The Contract Management Checklist will be replaced by a Project management approach to ensuring the all documentation is place at each stage of future contract processes. The Council has engaged external support from another Local Authority and the private sector to deliver training and provide guidance to ensure this is delivered effectively | Management Team | Project management approach is continuing to be developed. The contract checklist will remain in place. |

| | | |
|--|--------------|---------------------------------|
| The project Management approach will involve robust cost analysis prior to the start of the contract. There will be regular update meetings with the project team to address significant deviation from the initial costs. | Project Team | On-going throughout the project |
|--|--------------|---------------------------------|

Maritime Streets Landscaping Works.

The Council accepts that there were a number of Contract related issues. Remedial action will not resolve this position but will improve future contract management. The Council will improve future contract management and has sort an alternative method for tendering and awarding contracts.

| Action | Responsible officer | Completion Date |
|--|---------------------|---|
| The Contract Management Checklist will be replaced by a Project management approach to ensuring the all documentation is place at each stage of future contract processes. The Council has engaged external support from another Local Authority and the private sector to deliver training and provide guidance to ensure this is delivered effectively | Management Team | Project management approach is continuing to be developed. The contract checklist will remain in place. |
| The project Management approach will involve robust cost analysis prior to the start of the contract. There will be regular update meetings with the project team to address significant deviation from the initial costs. | Project Team | On-going throughout the project |

The No Assurance reports relate to existing leases.

| Action | Responsible officer | Completion Date |
|--|---------------------|---|
| The lease arrangements for Phoenix Business Centre are under consideration | Estates Manager | The Council is currently trying to resolve outstanding issues |

| | | |
|---|-----------------|----------|
| The lease on the Lawson Street property is currently being renewed on a full rental basis rather than shared income. It is deemed that the new lease does not require an auditing clause. | Estates Manager | Complete |
|---|-----------------|----------|

Head of internal Audit's opinion statement for 2018/19 identified a number of weakness in internal control. The Council produced an action plan to address the issues raised in 2018/19 and progress against these actions is in the table below

| Action | Responsible officer | Update |
|---|---------------------|--|
| Improve the administration and management of stalls and leasing in Barrow Market. | Market Supervisor | <p>Most recommendations have been implemented and this is substantially complete.</p> <p>Updates on the recommendations relating to the important issues are detailed below:</p> <p>Overtime levels are managed and monitored by Finance.</p> <p>Traders are regularly reminded and insurance certificates are checked where possible.</p> <p>Tenancy agreements are signed.</p> <p>Arrears: Arrears over £500 are challenged</p> <p>Cash: Storage arrangements have been improved.</p> <p>H&S: The Market Supervisor is responsible and is supported by the Council's H&S adviser.</p> <p>The minor issues have</p> |

| | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| | | <p>been resolved including:</p> <p>Website being is updated regularly.</p> <p>Arrangements in place for petty cash.</p> <p>Procedures and trader pack are updated as required.</p> <p>Fire alarms and lighting are tested routinely.</p> <p>Arrangements for casual stall holders and guidelines in place for trading space.</p> |
| <p>Review recruitment policy and ensure interviews are held in compliance with the policy. Review current grading structure.</p> | <p>HR Manager / Management Team</p> | <p>Updates on the recommendations relating to the major issues are detailed below:</p> <p>The review of the recruitment policy is complete and new arrangements are in place. The policy is being updated for publication.</p> <p>New arrangements are in place for high level posts.</p> <p>Arrangements are in place for assessing qualifications and grades and;</p> <p>shortlisting consistently. Training as been provided to support this.</p> <p>Updates on the recommendations relating to the important</p> |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | | <p>issues are detailed below:</p> <p>Appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure:</p> <p>Post approval pre recruitment,</p> <p>number of officers for selection and interviews,</p> <p>use of a formal checklist</p> <p>Retention of interview scoresheets,</p> <p>Redeployment,</p> <p>Appropriate criteria identified in the person specification,</p> <p>Monitoring of Interview questions</p> <p>The recommendations relating to the minor issues have been addressed.</p> |
| <p>Establish a service driven contract monitoring group to ensure contracts including formally extending contracts and retendering managed in line with the Council's Contract Standing orders.</p> | <p>Assistant Directors</p> | <p>This was established and is ongoing. As part of a wider initiative to improve the contract process the Head of Legal and Governance will have some oversight of this process.</p> |
| <p>Review arrangements for maintaining playing fields</p> | <p>Assistant Director – Community Services</p> | <p>This review is complete and appointment of alternative service provision is in progress.</p> |

Impacts of COVID-19

As lockdown measures were introduced across the country, the authority adjusted to the significant disruption to staffing across services and functions. The business continuity plans were implemented and reviewed to ensure that essential services continued to be delivered to our residents. A number of measures were quickly introduced to ensure the safety of staff, Members and customers, whilst maintaining service delivery; buildings were closed to the public, agile and flexible ways of working were introduced, virtual meetings were set up and social distancing and health and safety measures were established.

The Local Authority and Police and Crimes Commissioner elections were postponed under the Coronavirus Act 2020 and took place in May 2021.

Following regulations made under the Coronavirus Act 2020 the May 2020 Annual Council meeting was cancelled and appointments carried forward until the next Annual Meeting. Arrangements were put in place for all committee meetings to be held remotely and live streamed.

The Annual Meeting for 2021 was brought forward to April to enable it to be held remotely whilst regulations still permitted. Since 7 May 2021 arrangements have been made for a return to meetings in a physical venue adhering to covid requirements.

The CEO has delegated powers to take such action on behalf of the Council as appears to them necessary in circumstances that prevent obtaining the necessary authority from an appropriate committee following consultation with the Leader of the Council, as set out in the Council's constitution.

In order to deliver the local authority elements of the national COVID-19 support package of business grants, business rate reliefs and hardship relief, it was necessary to temporarily reassign resources and defer other priorities to ensure an effective response was achieved. The new powers from Coronavirus legislation were implemented by the Council. More details of the authority's response can be found in the Growing Forward reports presented to the Executive Committee in July 2020 and March 2021.

The majority of Council services have continued throughout although some services were suspended for a short period e.g. green waste collection and bulky waste collection. Additional waste collections were provided to minimise fly tipping while the Household Waste Recycling Centres were closed.

Car parking enforcement, leisure and cultural services were affected resulting in additional expenditure and a loss of income to be met from the COVID-19 emergency funding and sales, fees and charges compensation.

The Council actively supported the county wide strategic co-ordination group. The Council actively supported the community resilience group's approach to outbreak management by delivering track and trace.

Governance and Assurance Summary

The Council uses its Annual Governance Statement to demonstrate that it has sound decision making processes in place and governance arrangements that are fit for purpose.

The assurance reports received from the Heads of internal provide a useful indicator of the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements.

His opinion is that the Council has basically sound systems of control in place, although there are weaknesses which put some of the system objectives at risk.

The Council accepts this opinion and has put additional arrangements in place to further improve and enhance our governance arrangements.

These include a comprehensive review of the Council's constitution which clarified and affirmed the extent of officer delegation. We have strengthened the Senior Management Team by appointing a Director of People and Place and a Head of Legal and Governance. We have appointed external consultants to support the Council in delivering major projects and service improvements.

We are engaging with other Local Authorities and the private sector to deliver a project management approach to contract tendering.

The Council is undergoing a significant staff restructure which will additional Assistant Directors which will strengthen governance.

Certification Statement

The review of the governance arrangements for the financial year 2020/21 has not highlighted any areas of major concern for the Council. We believe that the existing arrangements are fit for purpose and are adequate to meet the Council's corporate aims.

Councillor Mrs A Burns

S Plum

Chair of the Audit Committee

Chief Executive

Draft