

Report of the Head of Internal Audit, Anti-Fraud and Assurance

AUDIT COMMITTEE – 3rd June 2020

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REVIEW – PROCESS AND TIMESCALES

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the proposed Annual Governance Review process to be adopted for the production of the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20.
- 1.2 To provide information regarding the timescales for the Annual Governance Review and production of the Annual Governance Statement.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **The Audit Committee is asked to note the proposed changes to the Annual Governance Review process for 2019/20 and the timescales for the production of the first draft of the Annual Governance Statement.**

3. Background information

- 3.1 As part of the process of producing the statutory Annual Governance Statement (AGS) there needs to be a mechanism for obtaining assurance from lead officers that good governance can be demonstrated.
- 3.2 It is proposed that the Annual Governance Review process is simplified from previous years and that we adopt an interim process for 2019/20 with a revised review process being implemented in future years which ties in with the Governance Assurance Framework to be introduced.
- 3.3 The process for the 2019/20 Annual Governance Statement will also be in 2 parts, one to reflect the 'normal' arrangements that we've had in place between April 2019 and March 2020, and a separate (but simple) process to capture the impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had/is having on our governance arrangements up to the point when the Annual Governance Statement will be formally signed which is likely to be September or October.

Interim Process for Annual Governance Review 2019/20

- 3.4 The production of information assurance packs (which were produced centrally and issued to lead officers) to support the previous production of the Annual Governance Statement is to cease.
- 3.5 Instead, a self-assessment document has been developed for completion by Service Directors, with questions linked to the Governance Domains (which form part of the new Governance Assurance Framework) which will prompt officers to consider the existence, adequacy and effectiveness of their Business Unit governance arrangements.

- 3.6 This document has been shared with Executive Directors and Service Directors for their comments and feedback, and these have been incorporated into the document.
- 3.7 For each statement within the self-assessment questionnaire Service Directors need to consider their Business Units relative compliance using a simple scoring system (1 – disagree strongly, 2- disagree slightly, 3 – agree slightly, and 4 – agree strongly) which enables corporate analysis of responses and identification of key themes and areas of strength and weakness across the organisation.
- 3.8 The self-assessment should be an honest, open and transparent review of systems, processes and arrangements operating and in place, and provides an opportunity for a retrospective look at governance arrangements in place during 2019/20 to inform the production of the Annual Governance Statement.
- 3.9 At the end of the assessment there is an opportunity to identify strengths within the service, weaknesses, areas for improvement and any areas of concern for the future.
- 3.10 Separate assurance statements will be obtained from Statutory Officers and the DPO, lead officers for Boards and Partnerships and lead officers in areas where Regulatory Inspections have been undertaken e.g. OFSTED and CQC which may have governance assurance implications.

Timescales for the Annual Governance Review 2019/20

Date	Action
By 5 June	Final Version of the self-assessment documentation to be issued to Service Directors
By 26 June	Facilitated meetings with Service Directors and/or DMT's with Head of Internal Audit, Anti-Fraud and Assurance and/or the Corporate Governance and Assurance Manager to complete the self-assessments (30/45 minutes)
By 26 June	Email assurance statements will be obtained during June from Statutory Officers, lead officers for Boards and Partnerships and inspections undertaken by Regulatory bodies during 2019/20 will be assessed for any governance assurance implications.
Early July	Prepare the first draft of the Annual Governance Statement
27 July	First draft of the Annual Governance Statement presented to the Audit Committee.

Officer Contact: Corporate Governance and Assurance Manager
Email: alisonsalt@barnsley.gov.uk
Date: 20 May 2020