**Joint Report of the Chief Executive,**
**Director of Finance, Assets and Information Services and**
**Director of Legal and Governance**

**AUDIT COMMITTEE 20th January 2016**

**ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2015/16**
**ACTION PLAN UPDATE ARISING FROM 14/15 AGR**

**1.      Purpose of the Report**

1.1     This brief report supports the updated action plan relating to the issues identified following the Annual Governance Review (AGR) for 2014/15. The action plan is attached as an Appendix to this report, and was originally considered with the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) by the Audit Committee at their meeting dated 18th September 2015.

**2.      Recommendation**

**2.1     It is recommended that the Audit Committee considers the progress being made against each item listed in the AGS Action Plan, and seeks any explanations regarding any aspects of the progress detailed from the named action owner.**

**3.      Action Plan Update**

3.1     An action plan is used to track the progress of the actions necessary to deal with the issues raised through the AGS process. The action plan for 2014/15 was developed in May and June 2015 when the AGS was first drafted. It was subsequently reviewed by the Audit Committee as a draft document in July 2015, and again in September 2015, when the AGS was accepted by the Audit Committee, and passed to Full Council for approval.

3.2     Generally, progress has been positive against all actions identified. This will be further reviewed in May and June 2016 as part of the 2016/17 AGR process.

**4.      List of Appendices**

4.1     Appendix One:        AGS Action Plan as at December 2015.

**5.      Background Papers**

5.1     Previous Audit Committee reports covering the development of the AGR process for 2014/15 and the approval of the 2014/15 AGS.

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         **Date:                 7th January 2016**

BARNSLEY METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
**ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT ACTION PLAN 2015/16**

| Ref | Annual Governance Statement Action | Responsible Director | Timescales | Current Position – Action Taken / Planned |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | To further develop and embed a practical framework to assist in the effective governance and control of the Council's partnerships, contracts and general relationships with external organisations. This has increased significance in the context of the Future Council programme. | **Executive Director, Legal and Governance** | 31st March 2016 | June 2015<br>A Working Group has been convened and is due to meet in August 2015, with representatives from all Directorates who will identify a suitable organisational approach.<br>The nature and scope of the Partnership Governance Framework has been significantly influenced by the transition towards the Future Council, and this has also had a bearing on overall timescales and progress. Now individual Business Unit characteristics are clearer, the identification of their significant partnerships and relationships will also be clearer.<br>A single framework approach will be in place by December 15.<br><br>**November 2015**<br>Partnership Governance Working Group convened August 2015. Proportionate approach to Partnership Governance developed and 'Statement of Good Practice' to be presented to SMT on 15th December 2015.<br><br>As part of a recent review of Partnership Governance arrangements undertaken by Internal Audit, it is likely a recommendation will be made to develop a practical checklist to assist Partnership lead officers. |
| 2 | To continue to develop a corporate Information Governance framework and associated policies / procedures and guidance for implementation across the Council. | **Executive Director, Finance, Assets and Information Services** | 31st March 2016 | June 2015<br>SD (Information Services) has developed the IT Framework. This includes Information Governance elements particularly around information security although a fully dated policy on systems access is still outstanding. The policy will require alignment against relevant Customer Services policies.<br><br>**November 2015**<br>The ICT Systems Access Policy has now been written, and approved by the Information Governance Board and SMT. |

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| | | | | However, there are a number of actions that are required to be completed. As some of these actions relate to Public Sector Network and Information Governance Toolkit compliance / requirements it is expected these will be completed by 31/03/2015. |
| 3 | Improving Performance and Development Review (P&DR) compliance across the Council in 2015/16. | **Executive Director, Human Resources, Performance and Communications** | 31st March 2016 | June 2015<br>The compliance with the P&DR process for 2015/16 will be monitored on a monthly basis by SMT.<br>A target of 85% compliance across the Council has been agreed.<br><br>**November 2015**<br>The corporate completion rate for P&DRs is:<br>11/06/2015 – 82.5%<br>16/07/2015 – 80.3%<br>01/10/2015 – 74.6%<br><br>Whilst the target for 2015/16 remains at 85% compliance, monthly reports are no longer being sent to SMT, who now receive reports when they are produced as part of the quarterly Performance Management reporting cycle. Compliance rates are being monitored within the Organisation and Workforce Improvement Team, who are looking to improve the process and systems by working collaboratively with Services. |
| 4 | Improving the use of financial management and monitoring application in 2015/16. | **Executive Director, Finance, Assets and Information Services** | 31st March 2016 | June 2015<br>New system went live April 2015.<br>Initial training with all Service Managers completed April 2015. Follow up training on forecasting and reporting functionality commenced July 2015. Usage tracked through standard budgetary procedures.<br><br>**November 2015**<br>The current usage statistics for the BPC system, as at the end of quarter two (30/09/2015) confirm that 78% of Budget Managers are engaging with the BPC system appropriately. Of the remaining 22%, it is important to note that the availability of Service Directors and Budget Holders during the reporting period will have influenced their ability to engage with the system.<br><br>This is a significant improvement on the previous average, which was included as part of the AGR process for last year, which was |

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| | | | | recorded as being at 16% compliance.<br><br>A final 15/16 year end statistic will be provided when this becomes available. |
| 5 | Improve the Council's Business Continuity Planning (BCP) arrangements in accordance with the 2014/15 Themed Internal Audit findings. | **Executive Director, Human Resources, Performance and Communications** | 31st December 2015 | June 2015<br>Internal Audit report issued 17/06/2015. Agreed management actions being implemented.<br><br>**November 2015**<br>SMT agreed to complete the outstanding corporate BCP and the majority of BCPs for Business Units/Services have been returned. The Corporate Health, Safety and Emergency Resilience Service have sent back comments where necessary and are now drafting a revised corporate plan.<br>A review of how BCP can be included in the general business planning process is being undertaken.<br>Templates have been revised based on feedback and the Internal Audit Report.<br>A final deadline for the completion of Service BCPs has been set for 27th November 2015 and the corporate plan will be ready in early December 2015 for presentation to SMT. |
| 6 | Review the recording of officer delegated decisions to ensure this in line with legislation. | **Executive Director, Legal and Governance** | 31st December 2015 | June 2015<br>Review the process for recording officer delegated decisions to ensure it is appropriate and robust.<br><br>**November 2015**<br>Draft guidance prepared by the Service Director (Council Governance) and passed to the Director, Legal and Governance for consideration.<br><br>Following receipt of feedback, it is envisaged this guidance will be considered by SMT, and finally, circulated to BLT. |