

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**AUDIT COMMITTEE**
9th NOVEMBER 2009**Annual Governance Statement – Action Plan**

OPEN	
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME:	Internal Organisational Theme
CORPORATE PLAN AIM:	A well-run and responsive Council
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Nathan Desmond
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	David Buckland – Director of Resources
CONTACT OFFICER:	David Buckland, Director of Resources- 2100 david.buckland@ wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES:	Appendix 1 - Annual Governance Statement Action Plan - 2008/09

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the current position in relation to the Action Plan which was developed to address the weaknesses identified within 2008/09 and any outstanding issues from the previous Annual Governance Statement.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **The Audit Committee is asked to review, approve and note the current position of the Annual Governance Statement Action Plan for 2008/09.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Regulation 4 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (amended 2006) required councils to review the "...effectiveness of their system of internal control..." at least once a year and to publish a Statement on Internal Control (SIC) each year with the Authority's financial statements. It also required the findings of the review to be considered by a Committee of the Council (or the whole Council). In the case of Wyre Forest this has been undertaken by the Audit Committee.
- 3.2 Further statutory guidance received by the Council requires the authority to widen the scope of the Statement on Internal Control to include further governance issues. CIPFA/SOLACE prepared guidance for Local Authorities in response to this move which now results in Councils being required to prepare an Annual Governance Statement which is to be included within the Statement of Accounts.
- 3.3 Full details were provided to the Audit Committee in March 2008 on these requirements in relation to the Annual Governance Statement. The Annual Governance Statement itself was presented and approved at the June meeting of the Audit Committee.

- 3.4 In determining the Annual Governance Statement, the Council is required to take into account all relevant information. In relation to the Statement that was approved in June the following sources of evidence were used:
- 3.5 In establishing the draft documents the following pieces of evidence were considered within the current Assurance Framework:
- Internal Audit Reports;
 - External Audit Reports;
 - Assurance Statements completed by senior staff;
 - Strategic Risk Register;
 - External Inspection findings including;
 - Investors in People etc.
- 3.6 Following consideration by the Corporate Management Team the Annual Governance Statement was approved by the Audit Committee at the meeting in June 2009.
- 3.7 The Action Plan was last presented to the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 29th June 2009, where any outstanding points from 2007/08 were agreed to be added to the 2008/09 Action Plan.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Annual Governance Statement identified areas of Corporate Governance which needed to be addressed during 2009/10. An Action Plan has been developed and is attached at Appendix 1, which identifies these areas and the progress that has been made in addressing these points.
- 4.2 Members are requested to review, approve and note the Action Plan and to note the current position in relation to the delivery of the necessary improvements.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 It is a requirement under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (amended 2006) that the Council prepares an Annual Governance Statement.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The Governance Framework pulls together all of the Council's information in relation to governance. In doing so the Council has regard for the Corporate Risk Register and approach to Risk Management. It is essential that the Council acts upon the significant governance issues that have been identified within the Annual Governance Statement.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 From 2007/8 the Authority was required to complete an Annual Governance Statement which is required to:

- Consider the arrangements required for gathering assurances for the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement;
- Consider the robustness of the Authority's governance arrangements;
- Monitor any actions arising from the review of arrangements.

8.2 This report identifies the progress that has been made to date in relation to the Annual Governance Statement approved on 29th June 2009.

9. CONSULTEES

9.1 Corporate Management Team.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Audit Committee – 17th March 2008 – Annual Governance Statement
23rd June 2008 – Annual Governance Statement 2007/08
10th November 2009 – AGS Action Plan
29th June 2009 – AGS Action Plan 2007/08
29th June 2009 – Annual Government Statement 2008/09