



**ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT
2015/2016**

FOR

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

AND

HAMPSHIRE PENSION FUND

Annual Governance Statement for Hampshire County Council and Hampshire Pension Fund

1. Scope of Responsibility

Hampshire County Council is responsible for ensuring that:

- its business is conducted in accordance with the law and to proper standards.
- public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively.
- pursuant to the Local Government Act 1999 it secures continuous improvements in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of efficiency, effectiveness and economy.
- there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the County Council's functions and which include arrangements for the management of risk.

These responsibilities also extend to the administration of the Hampshire Pension Fund, which is undertaken by the Pension Fund Panel. This Statement explains how the County Council has complied with the Code and meets with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 in relation to the publication of an Annual Governance Statement during 2015-2016

2. The purpose of Corporate Governance

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and cultures and values, by which the County Council is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. It enables the County Council to monitor the achievements of the County Council's 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 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 risk to the achievement of the County 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 governance framework has been in place at Hampshire County Council for the year ending 31 March 2016 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and the statement of accounts.

The County Council has approved and adopted a Code of Corporate Governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework 'Delivering Good Governance in Local Government' A copy of the Code is available on the County Council's Web site at:

[Code of Corporate Governance](#)

3. Establishing principal statutory obligations and organisational objectives

3.1 Mechanisms established to identify principal statutory obligations

The County Council's Constitution and the Code of Corporate Governance sets out the processes by which the County Council's policies are made and decisions taken.

The Audit Committee receives regular reports from both external and internal audit.

An Officer group comprising the Head of Law and Governance and representatives from Democratic and Member Services, Legal Services and the Insight and Engagement Unit has been established to specifically monitor new legislation. The Legislation Implementation and Review Group meet quarterly, or as required, and provides an effective mechanism for tracking new legislation and ensuring that the County Council is taking appropriate steps to implement it.

The County Council operates a system of Finance and HR Business Partners who work closely with the relevant Chief Officer and report through to the Head of Finance and Head of HR & Workforce Development respectively. The Director of Corporate Resources, Heads of Profession, Finance and HR Business Partners work together to ensure that both corporate and departmental financial and HR perspectives are taken into account in all papers for decision, and attend meetings to advise further as appropriate.

3.2 Mechanism in place to identify principal organisational obligations

The County Council remains committed to the three overall priorities set out in the Corporate Strategy: Hampshire safer and more secure for all, maximising wellbeing and enhancing our quality of place. Priorities are clearly communicated on the County Council website and through various communications.

The *Shaping Hampshire* Plan provides an operating model for business planning and a framework for reporting organisational progress to Cabinet bringing together key priorities for the Council into a coherent shared strategy. In addition to the *Transformation to 2015* and *Transformation to*

2017 workstreams, it also integrates departmental priorities, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy; Children and Young People's Plan; Workforce Development Strategy; and other key policy areas.

The Performance Management Framework complements the strategic narrative and business planning approach. The Framework was updated in 2013/14 following the approval of the *Shaping Hampshire* Plan.

Work is underway to refresh and revise the Council's Corporate Strategy, which runs until 2017.

Legislative change has been monitored and implemented where appropriate. The Council has tracked and responded to these national changes as they emerged, and proactively prepared for implementation.

Business and Financial Planning take into account the service and budgetary impact of working with external partners. The County Council has recognised that this is an area of increasing risk for the future as partnerships expand and as greater reliance is placed on securing and maintaining partner contributions to support service provision.

3.3 Effective Corporate Governance arrangements are embedded within the County Council

The County Council's Code of Corporate Governance complies with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) guidance.

The Head of Governance (Monitoring Officer) and the Chief Internal Auditor (for the Section 151 Officer) have close working relationships both between themselves, and with the Conduct Advisory Panel, and the Audit Committee.

During 2015-16, Internal Audit were required to comply with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Assurance that these Standards are met is provided through quality assessment and ISO quality accreditation. In accordance with the Standards an external assessment (required every five years) was commissioned for September 2015

The external assessment was undertaken by the Institute of Internal Auditors (IIA) who concluded that 'the Southern Internal Audit Partnership conforms to all principles within the Standards and work is performed in accordance with the International Professional Practice Framework (IPPF)'.

The Audit Committee approved the Internal Audit Charter and Plan for 2015-16 (June 2015). The internal audit plan is aligned to the County Council's three key priorities, as such ensuring assurance work adds maximum value in the effective delivery of its planned outcomes.

The Audit Committee continues to monitor performance and the progress of significant issues, including the implementation of management actions.

The Chief Internal Auditor will be submitting an Annual Audit Report and Opinion (2015-16) to the June 2016 Audit Committee on the effectiveness of the control framework

3.4 Performance management arrangements are in place

As outlined above, the Council's Performance Management Framework (PMF) provides a robust and coherent way to manage and improve services across the organisation. It is based on a cycle of continuous improvement.

Transparent processes are in place for regular reporting to CMT and Cabinet. CMT are responsible for providing support and challenge, in order to manage performance against the *Shaping Hampshire* Plan.

In addition, departments have robust mechanisms for 'people' performance management through a new 'Valuing Performance' (VP) framework that was introduced in January 2015. The framework ensures that staff efforts are directed to the priority areas of the Council and enables assessment of their performance against goals that have been set, and how objectives have been achieved assessed against a behaviour framework. One of the key aims being to continually focus on the need for consistent high performance.

Performance management arrangements are enhanced by a thorough and fully embedded system of budget forecasting and monitoring which is both supported and challenged by the Finance Department.

Performance information is published online and easily accessible for staff, partners and the public. The way performance information is presented online was improved through the use of infographics in 2014/15. Performance information is sited alongside transparency and financial data which is compliant with Government guidance.

The budget for 2015/16 was set in February 2015 and incorporated the savings proposals that had already been approved one year before. This forward planning provided the time and capacity for the County Council to fully implement the savings prior to the start of the financial year and to carry out public consultations where necessary on the detailed proposals.

Enhanced 'Financial Resilience' reporting to the Corporate Management Team was implemented during 2015/16, recognising the greater risks inherent within the budget following cumulative reduction in spend of over £240m since 2011

Programme Management and reporting arrangements are also a key feature of the Transformation to 2017 Programme underpinned by DMT

level leads for taking the programme forward, supported by our private sector partners.

The Annual Audit Letter – Year Ending 31 March 2015 was considered by the Audit Committee (3 December 2015) concluding:

Financial Statement Audit – We issued an unqualified audit report on 25 September 2015

Value for Money – We issued an unqualified Value for Money conclusion on 25 September 2015

Annual Governance Statement – the Statement met with the CIPFA / SOLACE requirements and was consistent with other information from our audit of the financial statements.

4.1 Focusing on the purpose of the County Council and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area

The County Council has a clear vision and purpose, articulated through the three corporate priorities and the *Shaping Hampshire* Plan. The Plan (described above) provides a coherent, shared vision for the organisation. Implementation of these ambitions is through department business plans and efficiency/transformation work streams.

The County Council develops its understanding of local needs through established strategic and tactical approaches, including: Equality Impact Assessments, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Child Poverty Needs Assessment, and regular engagement with stakeholders and partners through established forums, such as the Children's Trust and the Health and Wellbeing Board. As described above, the Council also builds an understanding of resident opinion through regular consultation activity.

Partnerships are underpinned by a common vision, which is understood and agreed by all partners. Clear governance structures are also in place.

A key element of ensuring strong service delivery and outcomes for the community has been to ensure that we continue to develop a high performance culture across the Council. Referenced earlier in the report is our new approach to people performance management (VP). A key part of this is to ensure that development opportunities are available and tailored to meet the needs of the organisation and its people. During 2015, there has been a strong emphasis on increasing performance, this has included specialised interventions dependant upon role or profession together with a 'Leadership Offer' that is aligned to business needs.

The Performance Management Framework establishes how the quality of services for users is to be measured and reviewed on a regular basis. This includes quarterly reporting of progress against the *Shaping Hampshire* Plan and an annual self-assessment, to be completed by departments.

The County Council's Annual Performance Report is published on the website and performance achievements publicised through targeted communications activities. The report includes key achievements and a summary of performance.

The County Council has an effective and comprehensive department and corporate complaints system which allows for any failures in service delivery to be properly dealt with; and lessons learnt. Areas for improvement identified through service user feedback and complaints are addressed through the department and service planning processes.

Through the Council's Digital Project, a programme of change is being undertaken to enable the council to deliver services in ways which meet the needs and expectations of future citizens. As part of this work, a new Customer Operating Model has been developed and a revised governance structure is being put in place to oversee the implementation, management and continuous improvement of the delivery of customer services / channels.

The Council considers that the achievement of value for money in the delivery of its services is fundamental.

4.2 Members and Officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles

The Constitution and the Code of Corporate Governance set out the respective roles of Members and Senior Officers.

The relationship between Members and Officers is enforced by an established Member/Officer Protocol.

For Officers, all issues relating to remuneration and terms and conditions are managed by the Council's Employment in Hampshire County Council Committee (EHCC) which is advised by the Chief Executive and the Director of Corporate Resources.

4.3 Promoting values for the County Council and demonstrating the values of good Governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour

The County Council's Constitution is founded on it operating in an open and transparent way, and for the Leader of the County Council and the Chief Executive to set the tone for the organisation by creating a climate and culture of openness, support, and respect.

The County Council is committed to the highest ethical standards and has adopted a wide range of policies to re-enforce this philosophy as well as procedures to investigate them should the need arise. These policies and procedures are set out in the Code of Corporate Governance

4.4 Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk

The County Council's Constitution and Corporate Governance Framework ensures that appropriate legal and financial advice is given and also that decisions made are open and transparent. The County Council's Constitution requires that openness in individual Executive Members decision making goes beyond the minimum statutory requirements by ensuring that, subject to confidential items, all such decisions are made in public.

Advice is available to Members from the Head of Law and Governance and Head of Legal Services on any aspects of the Members Code of Conduct or conflicts of interest that may arise either before or at the point where a decision is to be made.

Within their own areas of responsibility, Executive Members, Committee Chairmen and Vice Chairmen, Minority Group Spokespersons and Local Members are routinely briefed in relation to pending business.

Hampshire County Council has a well-developed and respected scrutiny function, which is resourced effectively to ensure that Members are able to robustly challenge decision-making, play an active role in policy review and development, and monitor the performance of the Authority as a whole. This structure is formalised through the Council's Constitution.

The role of the Head of Law and Governance, as Monitoring Officer, supported by members of Legal Services, is also critical in ensuring that all decisions made are legally and soundly based.

There is a comprehensive risk management framework in place with effective processes for managing risk. The Risk Management Board, chaired by the Director of Transformation and Governance, reviews arrangements for managing risk in accordance with the Council's Risk Management Strategy. Risk is considered and presented to Members as part of the reports that authorise significant projects/activity and included in progress reports on the Council's major change programmes.

4.5 Developing the capacity and capabilities of Members and Officers to be effective

All new Officers and Members joining the County Council undergo an Induction Programme.

The capacity and capability of Members and officers is directly aligned to the shaping Hampshire Plan 2013-17. This is driven through the compilation of People Priority Plans by HR in conjunction with Departmental Management Teams which are updated on a regular basis and shaped by emerging health and wellbeing together with workforce development themes.

The County Council has in place a Member Development Group (MDG) which is a cross-party forum that supports and oversees the development of Members by a variety of means, i.e. internal and external training courses, induction programme for new Members, an established and well received monthly Member Briefing Programme and ad hoc departmental briefings. The MDG is supported by the Head of Democratic & Member Services and the Commissioner for People in the Shared Services Workforce Development Team.

A Corporate Governance e-learning module was developed and launched in July 2010 (and reviewed February 2016). The e-learning module is available to all County Council staff and forms part of the mandatory corporate induction programme.

The Hampshire Pension Fund Governance Policy Statement confirms that Members of the Pension Fund Panel have opportunities to attend training courses and seminars on pension fund matters when necessary and appropriate. A training plan for Members of the Panel has been prepared and training logs for individual Members are maintained.

4.6 Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

In February 2015, Cabinet approved the Council's Consultation Policy, including five key principles for undertaking consultations, which forms part of the County Council's Corporate Governance Framework

The County Council undertakes a programme of consultation with residents, business and other key organisations on a wide range of issues.

A wide range of documents are published to ensure that the County Council can be held to account:

- County Council and partnership strategies and plans
- *Shaping Hampshire* Plan performance updates and annual performance report
- *Transformation to 2015* update reports
- *Transformation to 2017* update reports
- Financial statements and accounts
- Select Committee reports
- Audit reports
- The publication of transparency and other open data.

The County Council has made a public commitment to openness, accountability and transparency through its Transparency Policy Statement, which it publishes on its website. It has published a wide range of information in accessible formats as "open data", including details of salaries, spending and contracts

5 Identify principal risks to achievement of objectives

5.1 The County Council has robust systems and processes in place for the identification and management of strategic and operational risk

There is a comprehensive risk management framework in place with effective processes for managing risk. The Risk Management Board, chaired by the Director of Transformation and Governance, reviews arrangements for managing risk in accordance with the Council's Risk Management Strategy.

The County Council benchmarks the performance of its risk management arrangements with other public sector organisations through participation in the CIPFA/Alarm benchmarking club. The scoring matrix within the performance model shows the County Councils risk management arrangements within the "embedded and integrated" range.

The County Council largely self-insures against risk, subject to the availability of catastrophic insurance. The system of self insurance is subject to internal audit, review by external insurers and oversight by the Risk Management Board.

Performance risks are identified and mitigated in line with the established corporate risk management framework. In addition, the Performance Management Framework establishes a transparent cycle of reporting, including quarterly reporting of progress against the *Shaping Hampshire* Plan and an annual self-assessment, completed by departments.

6 Identify key controls to manage risk

6.1 The Authority has robust systems of internal control which includes systems and procedures to mitigate principal risks.

The financial management of the County Council is led by the Director of Corporate Resources, and is integrated with and influenced by the processes set out above. It includes processes for forward planning and expenditure, consultation on budget proposals, setting and monitoring income and budgets, and completion of final accounts. All are intended to be accurate, informative, timely and within statutory requirements.

The Cabinet and County Council approve the annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy together with the mid year review and outturn report and Arlingclose Limited, the County Council's Treasury Management advisors have confirmed that the County Council fully complies with the Prudential Code. The Audit Committee is responsible for challenging and scrutinising treasury management activity and practices.

A high level scheme of delegation is contained within the Constitution, and this is supplemented within each Department whereby the Chief Officer

authorises other senior Officers to carry out allocated functions on their behalf.

Each department reports directly to their Executive Member as appropriate on matters of budgetary approval.

The County Council's current Corporate Procurement Strategy (CPS) (formally approved by Cabinet) is complimented by a comprehensive Best Practice Guide

The Corporate Procurement Network includes representation from the Council's Legal Services Team, which provides appropriate advice and support across departmental procurement teams and contributes to the content of the Best Practice Guide.

Internal Audit continues to maintain its focus on procurement within the County Council.

The County Council supports collaborative procurement with local, regional and national partners. A formal shared procurement service between the County Council, Hampshire Constabulary (HC) and Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service (HFRS) is in place as part of a wider programme of joint working.

Business continuity arrangements are in place for all critical services against guideline criteria described in the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

The Corporate Risk Register is reviewed and reassessed on a regular basis by the Risk Management Board. Departmental risks are subject to an annual reassessment. In addition, risk is reported through the Corporate Performance Framework.

A professional lead for Health and Safety is in place, along with a suite of policies and guidance covering all aspects of Health and Safety, which are available to all staff.

Information risk and governance arrangements are in place to ensure the appropriate balance between openness and confidentiality in the management and use of information. The County Council has a nominated Senior Information Risk Officer (SIRO), with a framework for information governance in place, reporting to the Risk Management Board. The County Councils IT service holds ISO27001 compliance for its information security management system.

Performance risks are considered within the Performance Management Framework. In addition, the Performance Management Framework establishes a transparent cycle of reporting, including quarterly reporting of progress against the County Council Business Plan and an annual self-assessment, to be completed by Departments.

Within the County Council, internal audit assists managers by evaluating and reporting to them the effectiveness of the controls for which they are responsible.

The internal audit charter approved by the Audit Committee, requires the regular assessment and review of risks, controls and governance processes and also the provision of an annual report and opinion from the Chief Internal Auditor. This is a key element of the assurance available to the Monitoring Officer in drafting the Annual Governance Statement.

During 2014 the DCLG made available £16m to assist Councils in developing innovative and holistic initiatives to tackle the fight against fraud. A successful bid from the Southern Internal Audit Partnership has resulted in funding being awarded to support initiatives in respect of fraud detection and prevention.

The Chief Internal Auditor's Annual Report and opinion for the Hampshire Pension Fund states that " Based on internal audit work completed 'Substantial Assurance' can be placed on Hampshire County Council (Pension Services) framework of governance, risk management and management control and audit testing has demonstrated controls to be working in practice".

7 Obtain assurances on the effectiveness of key controls

7.1 Appropriate assurance statements are received from designated internal and external assurance providers

Key controls relating to risks, internal control (including financial management), and governance processes are identified by managers as part of the governance framework and recorded on regular returns. These are consolidated into the risk registers at corporate and departmental level. Internal Audit, as part of its planned review of internal controls regularly evaluates the key controls to determine their adequacy and also carries out tests to confirm the level of compliance. Together the results of each review enable an audit opinion on effectiveness to be provided to management, and any actions for improvement to be agreed. This assurance is given to each manager in respect of the controls they are responsible for in the form of an audit report and regular summaries are provided for Chief Officers and the Audit Committee to ensure each level of the County Council's management is kept informed of findings and opinions.

External sources of assurance include the annual opinion and value for money conclusion by external auditors, and statutory inspections of adults social care services, and children's services. These reports are subject to consideration by senior management and Members of the County Council, and appropriate response to any recommendations for improvements are agreed. These reports and responses are normally approved in public and published.

8 Evaluate assurances and identify gaps in control/assurance

8.1 The County Council has made adequate arrangements to identify, receive and evaluate reports from the defined internal and external assurance providers to identify weaknesses in controls.

The County 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 officers within the County Council who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Chief Internal Auditor's annual report, and also by comments made by the external auditors and other review agencies and inspectorates.

The Head of Law and Governance and the Chief Internal Auditor have evaluated the reports from the internal and external assurance providers which have also been reported to the Audit Committee. This Annual Governance Statement sets out the County Council's arrangements for receiving reports and identifying weaknesses in Internal control.

One of the key elements of the Corporate Governance regime and the production of the Annual Governance Statement is the methodology applied to obtain the necessary assurance. This has included:

- a detailed self assessment questionnaire being sent every year to all Departments
- consultation with other relevant officers throughout the County Council.

The questionnaires cover a wide range of Corporate Governance and performance issues. They refer to the existence, knowledge and application within departments of governance policies generally, but also concentrate on specific issues which have been identified as having greater significance to the County Council.

In line with the Internal Audit Charter approved by the Audit Committee in June 2015 and which is available on the County Council's website, the key elements of the Corporate Governance framework are risk assessed and reviewed periodically by Internal Audit.

The Internal Audit Team's work forms the basis of a report to the relevant Chief Officer or Key Corporate Manager for any follow up work necessary, and feeds into this Annual Governance Statement.

Departmental Corporate Governance and self assessment questionnaires were sent out to Departments in 2016.

9 Action plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system of corporate governance

- The Council's Corporate Strategy *Shaping Hampshire* covers the period 2013-2017. Work has commenced to review and refresh the Corporate Strategy for the next four years with a view to agreeing the revised Strategy ahead of April 2017.
- A new customer channels and engagement governance structure will be established by April 2017. This will include a Customer Board to provide strategic oversight and governance to the implementation and operational management of the Customer Operating Model
- The Corporate Performance Framework will be updated to report against the new Corporate Strategy and refreshed to take account of the new Customer Operating Model and wider implementation of the Digital Project. As part of this work, the departmental self-assessment process will be reviewed.
- The County Council will need to maintain a strong focus on delivery of Transformation to 2017 Programme savings at the same time as developing plans for Transformation to 2019 which seek to remove a further £140m from the budget.
- Continuing the relentless focus on the governance and control framework for shared transactional services to minimise the potential risk of errors.
- As part of the Council's new Procurement & Commercial operating model, the governance arrangements in relation to external spend across the commercial lifecycle will be reviewed. .

10 There is a robust mechanism to ensure that an appropriate action plan is agreed to address identified control weaknesses and is implemented and monitored.

In response to the Action Plan identified in the 2014-2015 Annual Governance Statement;-

- In line with a commitment in the Code of Corporate Governance, Cabinet has agreed a new Consultation Policy. The Policy and Resources Select Committee will scrutinise implementation of the policy in 2016.
- A new Customer Operating Model has been designed as part of the Council's Digital Project to position the council to: strategically drive how services are delivered, better understand the cost of those services and the customers who are consuming them, and to shift channels, processes and capabilities to meet future demand. As

part of this, the need for a new governance structure for customer contact has been identified.

- Specific action plans targeting key staff and suppliers were put in place during 2015/16 for Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, Hampshire Constabulary and latterly the County Council reflecting the relative size and complexity of each of the organisations. Enhancements to the system following the on-boarding of Oxfordshire County Council ('OCC') have also improved performance in this area.
- The Joint Working Board was formally dis-banded and the Operational Forum began to meet during 2015/16 chaired by the Section 151 Officer at OCC, who then reports through to the Strategic Direction Board consisting of the three Chiefs from the strategic partners.
- A review of Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders was concluded and approved by County Council in July last year.
- Transformation to 2015 continued to be reported as an inherent part of the 'Financial Resilience' monitoring to Corporate Management Team that was implemented during the year and sought to ensure that all key risks in the budget were being effectively managed. A strong programme management approach continued to be applied to the Transformation to 2017 Programme together with regular reporting to Cabinet on progress, resourcing and key issues.
- A full public consultation exercise on the Transformation to 2017 Programme savings proposals was carried out in summer 2015 and the results were used to inform final decisions on savings proposals taken by Cabinet and County Council in October 2015.
- A new Information Governance Strategy and Action Plan has been approved by the Risk Management Board.
- The Risk Management Strategy was reviewed and a new Strategy approved by the Risk Management Board.
- Further open data has been published in accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency.
- A number of high risk issues were identified within the transactional area of the Shared Services Partnership during 2015/16 following errors in some ad hoc payroll processes (mainly constabulary). A formal Governance and Control framework has therefore been introduced within the Corporate Resources Department to address these specific issues and to improve staff members wider understanding of good decision making and control in the context of transactional services. This also extends to those staff who may be in the position of instructing transactional areas to carry out changes.

- The proposed work on assurance mapping has been delayed due to the risk registers requiring an update. This work is currently being undertaken by the Corporate Risk Manager. Time has therefore been scheduled during 2016/17 to undertake the assurance mapping piece of work.
- The County Council has a high performing cadre of leaders who have driven delivery of the County Council's strategy over recent years and continue to do so. However, the context of the Council is evolving and the leadership challenges faced by senior officers are changing. As a result, the County Council has developed a 'leadership offer' that places a focus on the areas that our leaders will need to excel in if they are to meet the complexity and scale of challenge facing them. The 'offer' provides a range of development opportunities which are core to the needs of the County Council and which can be tailored in order to maximise impact and learning. The 'offer' will be kept under review and refreshed as the context continues to change.
- Work has progressed throughout the year, particularly for HFRA and HC to look at those suppliers and Departmental users where there are the highest number of process errors. This has enabled the team to focus on the high volume areas where problems are occurring and to address them at source. A similar exercise is ongoing with HCC, but clearly the scale for the County Council is significant and a more structured approach has therefore been necessary.
- The Digital Strategy was further developed during the year with key milestones reached in terms of approvals, planning and procurement. Internal and external resources have been put in place ready for the Programme to commence in the new financial year.

Declaration

We have been advised on the implications of the result of the review of the effectiveness of the governance framework by the Audit Committee and that the arrangements continue to be regarded as fit for purpose in accordance with the governance framework. The areas already addressed and those to be specifically addressed with new actions planned are set out in this Statement.

We propose over the coming year to take steps to address the above matters 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.

Signed:

Signed:

Date:

Date:

Chief Executive

Leader of the County Council