Chorley Council

Report of	Meeting	Date
Head of Shared Assurance Services	**Governance Committee**	**17 January 2013**

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 2012 – PROGRESS REPORT

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1   To provide members of the Governance Committee with an update on the progress made to implement several enhancements to the Council's system of governance as identified in the 2012 Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

RECOMMENDATION

2   That members note the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

3   The Council is required to conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of its system of governance and publish an AGS each year alongside its financial statements.

4   The AGS for 2012 was approved by the Governance Committee at the June 2012 meeting and incorporated a number of proposed enhancements to the Council's system of governance. This report provides members with an update on the progress made to implement those proposed enhancements.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	**No**

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

5   The report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities		An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	**x**

BACKGROUND

6   Under the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2011 every Council is required to conduct an annual review of the effectiveness of its system of governance and publish an AGS each year alongside its financial statements.

7   The Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) have issued a Framework and supporting guidance

entitled "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government" under which councils need to prepare their AGS. The key element of this is a corporate self assessment of the council's governance arrangements.

8   The Framework requires the most senior officer (chief executive or equivalent) and the most senior member (leader or equivalent) to sign the AGS. They must be satisfied that the document is supported by reliable evidence and accurately reflects the Council's system of governance.

9   The guidance also states the need for an independent review body in the process such as the Governance Committee, which should be charged with critically reviewing the AGS and its supporting documentation.

10   At the June meeting of the Governance Committee, members were asked to review the draft AGS for 2012 which had been produced in accordance with CIPFA / SOLACE guidelines. The AGS was subsequently signed by the Leader and Chief Executive before being submitted for external audit alongside the 2011/12 financial statements. The Audit Commission have since issued an unqualified opinion on those statements.

11   The corporate self assessment identified several opportunities to enhance the Council's governance arrangements and these were reported in Section 5 of the AGS. They have since been incorporated into a detailed Action Plan, the progress against which is shown at the Appendix to this report.

12   The final out-turn position on the attached Action Plan will be incorporated in the 2013 AGS Report which will be presented to the Governance Committee in June 2013.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

13   This report has no implications for specific services. The matters raised in the report are cross cutting and impact upon the authority as a whole

GARRY BARCLAY
HEAD OF SHARED ASSURANCE SERVICES

Background Papers			
Document	**Date**	**File**	**Place of Inspection**
Accounts & Audit Regulations	2011	Shared Assurance Services	Civic Centre Leyland
Delivering Good Governance in Local Government (CIPFA / SOLACE)	2007		

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Garry Barclay	(01772) 625272	7/1/13	2012 AGS Progress.doc

APPENDIX – 2012 AGS ACTION PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

Agreed Improvement	Lead Officer	Start Date	Finish Date	SMART Actions & Milestones	Status (RAG)	Comments
Review and update the Council's approach to consulting with and providing feedback to the local community and other stakeholders on service design & delivery	Chris Sinnott	Jan 2013	Jan 2013	Review and refresh the council's consultation and engagement strategies	Green	This is due to be undertaken in January 2013.
Review and update the Council's Communications Strategies and Policies	Chris Sinnott	April 2012	Sept 2012	Develop internal communications action plan	Complete	The internal communications plan has been completed and agreed.
	Chris Sinnott	Oct 2012	Feb 2013 (Revised)	Develop and agree Communications and Marketing Strategy	Green	Following a restructure and change in the focus of the communications team, the communications and marketing strategy will be replaced with campaigns and engagement strategy which will be completed by February 2013.
Review & update the Framework for Partnership Working	Chris Sinnott	May 2012	Sept 2012	Framework for Partnership Working updated	Complete	This work has been completed and was approved by Executive Cabinet in October.
Undertake a review of compliance with the revised CIPFA Standards on Audit Committees once they are published	Garry Barclay	TBD	TBD	To be determined	Green	Standards still under revision

Agreed Improvement	Lead Officer	Start Date	Finish Date	SMART Actions & Milestones	Status (RAG)	Comments
Introduce a Local Code of Conduct for Members on Standards following the publication of new national guidance, including procedures in relation to the declaration of interests and for the investigation and hearing of complaints	Chris Moister	June 2012	July 2012	Draft code and procedure for provisional adoption Exec Cabinet 21 June Code and Procedure for ratification of adoption 17 July	**Complete**	Member training sessions have now been provided in relation to the Local Code All members completed a disclosure under the old regime within 28 days of the election, either a new one or a reaffirmation of the existing one. An on line declaration system under the new standards regime is now in place which we are encouraging members to use (with success) which will put the data straight on the web (as required).
Review and re-issue the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations	Chris Moister	June 2012	Sept 2012	Protocol reviewed Leaders briefing To Council 25th September for adoption and incorporation into Constitution	**Complete**	
Undertake a members' skills analysis and update the member development programme especially to cater for the needs of incoming members and those taking on new, key roles	Chris Moister & Camilla Oakes Schofield	May 2012	March 2013	Member PDP reviews are undertaken every 2 years and all were done in 11/12. A training needs schedule has been reported to Member Support Working Group to help form the MD programme for the year. Since the change of administration and a new Executive/new Chairs of Committees more skills based sessions are being arranged based on requests from the Executive Leader to ensure senior members have the necessary skill set.	**Green**	The MD programme is always a mix of skills and initiative based training which is based on identified training needs from PDPs and new developments or legislation which Members must be kept informed about. Member learning sessions continue to be held on a monthly basis with a significant number of additional sessions and external training opportunities. The main method of publicity is through

Agreed Improvement	Lead Officer	Start Date	Finish Date	SMART Actions & Milestones	Status (RAG)	Comments
				Details of these are available. Delivery will be on-going through 2012/13.

Newly elected councillors will have a PDP interview in Oct 2012 (6 months after election to allow them a settling in period to assess their own needs/interests). They have all attended induction training following their election with the option to select a range of follow up training in key service areas. | | intheknow.

Member Support Working Group oversees MD matters meeting on a quarterly basis. The membership always includes one newly elected member and they have reviewed induction processes; receive attendance information; give views on member development proposals and given direction to other aspects of MD. |
| Set & monitor consistent standards for productivity throughout the organisation following a baseline assessment of current productivity levels | Chris Sinnott | Aug 2012

Nov 2012

Jan 2013 | Sept 2012

Dec 2012

Feb 2013 | Undertake first reporting

Develop reporting mechanisms

Undertake review | Green | |
| Review and update data quality procedures in relation to the checking and validation of input | Chris Sinnott | April 2012 | May 2012 | Revise and agree new data quality policy | Complete | |
| As a key element of the Council's Information Management Strategy, review the current procedures for document management, storage and retention | Asim Khan | April 2012 | March 2013 | The upgrading and further enterprise rollout of the Northgate EDMS software has greatly improved the flow and accessibility of customer related information and documents within the Council. The future development of the SharePoint Information Management system will further enhance the availability of non-customer related documents.

A Council retention policy will be | Green | |

Agreed Improvement	Lead Officer	Start Date	Finish Date	SMART Actions & Milestones	Status (RAG)	Comments
				drafted early in the new year.		
Utilise the asset management module in Customer Services to incorporate the Council's ICT hardware inventory	Asim Khan	April 2012	March 2013	The asset management software in MSCOM will be considered for tracking and managing the Councils ICT hardware inventory following rollout of the user helpdesk.	Green	