

**Open Report on behalf of Pete Moore, Executive Director Finance and Public Protection**

Report to:	<b>Audit Committee</b>
Date:	<b>22 September 2014</b>
Subject:	<b>Approval of the Council's Annual Governance Statement 2014</b>

**Summary:**

Each year the Council is required to reflect on how well the Council's governance framework has operated during the year and identify any governance issues that we need to draw to the attention of Lincolnshire's residents.

Good governance underpins everything we do as a Council and how we deliver services often comes under close scrutiny.

A 'good' Annual Governance Statement is an open and honest self- assessment of how well we have run our business across all activities - with a clear statement of the actions being taken or required to address any areas of concern.

The Audit Committee oversees the development of the Annual Governance Statement and recommends its adoption by the Council.

**Recommendation(s):**

That the Committee considers the contents of the Annual Governance Statement 2014 , and:

1. agree that it accurately reflects how the Council is run;
2. that the statement includes the significant governance issues / key risks it would have expected to be published;
3. approves the statement and recommend it for adoption by the Council.

## Background

### What do we mean by Governance?

- 1 Governance is about how local authorities ensure that they are:

*‘doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in an open, honest, inclusive and timely manner’*

- 2 It is comprised of systems, processes and culture and values, by which the Council is directed and controlled and through which they account to, engage with, and where appropriate, lead their communities.

*"If management is about running the business – governance is about seeing that it is run properly"<sup>1</sup>*

### What is the Governance Framework?

- 3 At its meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> July 2014 the Audit Committee considered the draft Annual Governance Statement for 2014. A number of changes to the statement were suggested by the Committee – these have been actioned.

### *Governance Issues*

- 4 The areas identified where further work is required to improve systems or monitor how the key risks facing the Council are being managed are:
  - Maintaining Good Governance
  - Integration of Health and Social Care
  - Responding to the Care & Support Bill
  - Capacity to deliver
  - Future Delivery of Support Services
  - Safeguarding Children
  - Ensuring all children have access to a good education
  - Organisational Learning around the Libraries Judicial Review
- 5 These areas are highlighted because of the need for the Council to be realistic and open about those functions and activities which require, or are likely to require, support (including but not limited to financial support) over the next year in order to ensure that they are working effectively and efficiently. This in turn should ensure that any future problems in those areas are averted or at the very least minimised.
- 6 The final Annual Governance Statement can be found in Appendix A. It is presented to the Committee for your consideration of the contents eg:

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Tricker. An expert in Corporate Governance.

- Does the Statement accurately reflect the Committee's understanding of how the Council is run?
- Have the changes requested by the Committee on the draft statement – considered in July 2014 – been actioned.

## Conclusion

- 7 The Council has a strong control environment which is demonstrated by the realistic and open assessment of its functions and activities.
- 8 Officers have identified a number of governance issues to be included in the Annual Governance Statement.
- 9 The purpose of the Annual Governance Statement is to strengthen the Council's governance arrangements – demonstrating accountability. Our governance arrangements should not only be sound but seen to be sound.

## Consultation

### a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

n/a

## Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Lincolnshire County Council - Annual Governance Statement 31 March 2014

## Background Papers

The following background papers as defined in the Local Government Act 1972 were relied upon in the writing of this report.

Document title	Where the document can be viewed
Draft Annual Governance Statement 2014	Audit Committee records - 22 July 2014

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