

## Regulatory and Other Committee

### Open Report on behalf of Richard Wills, Executive Director for Environment and Economy

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| Report to: | <b>Audit Committee</b>   |
| Date:      | <b>30 March 2015</b>   |
| Subject:   | <b>Internal Audit Report - Organisational Learning - Libraries Project - Action Plan</b> |

#### Summary:

The Committee requested that the Corporate Management Team consider and develop an management response to the findings and suggested improvements arising from the Internal Audit of the Libraries Project.

This report outlines the action to be taken to strengthen the Council's governance and assurance arrangements.

#### Recommendation(s):

That the Committee:

1. Accepts the response from Dr Tony Hill on the Library Service actions, and;
2. Receives the Action Plan from the Corporate Management Board

#### Background

The Internal Audit review of the Libraries project was considered by the Committee at its last meeting – 26<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

The audit was commissioned following the outcome of the Judicial Review around the lawfulness of the Council's decision making process to reduce the Library Services within Lincolnshire.

Corporate Management Board has considered the report findings and approved a management response and action plan. The attached action plan (**Appendix A**) addresses the key areas of suggested improvement, namely:

- Assessment of option appraisals.
- An enhanced project monitoring process by Corporate Management Board on key or high risk projects / programmes.
- Review of scrutiny in light of the Council Motion in February 2015.

- Providing guidance on the use of legal services throughout a project.
- Development of a Consultation Framework that is appropriate and proportionate – including review of resource availability and demand in light of experience.
- New framework for equality impact assessments approved.
- Legal to provide advice on the Localism Act / Open Public Services.
- Some further consideration needed around the role of councillors in scrutiny committees as well as executive councillors. This may involve development training and constitutional guidance.
- Acknowledgement that risk is at the centre of most judgements. Generally, the Council has been good at identifying the high risk decisions and putting in the resource that's necessary. Emphasis on the importance of the Council not being risk averse.
- Review of committee reporting to be undertaken with additional guidance for those preparing executive reports / briefings to councillors.

With specific reference to the Libraries Service, Dr Tony Hill has provided a response reflecting on the new approach undertaken since the judicial review and assess the extent to which the improvements were implemented. This is attached in **Appendix B**.

## **Conclusion**

The review of the Library Service involved a complex range of political, economic and social objectives – the decision around the future delivery of libraries was sensitive, difficult and multi-faceted – the proposed changes were significant.

The lessons arising out of this project and internal audit report has been fully considered by the Corporate Management Board with action agreed to strengthen the Council's governance, risk and control environment.

## **Consultation**

### **a) Policy Proofing Actions Required**

N/A

## **Appendices**

|   |  |
|---|--|
| These are listed below and attached at the back of the report |  |
| Appendix A  | Internal Audit Report: Organisational Learning - Libraries Project Action Plan |

**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 |
|---|----------------------------------|
| Internal Audit Report - Organisational Learning _ Libraries Project | Audit Committee - January 2015   |

This report was written by Lucy Pledge, who can be contacted on 01522-553692 or [lucy.pledge@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:lucy.pledge@lincolnshire.gov.uk).

This page is intentionally left blank