NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Draft Annual Governance Statement

2014/15

May 2015

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Annual Governance Statement

2014 to 2015

1. Scope of Responsibility

North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC) is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, and used economically, efficiently and effectively. NHDC also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, NHDC is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements for the governance of its affairs, facilitating the effective exercise of its functions, and which include arrangements for the management of risk.

NHDC 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. The Council reviewed its governance framework in 2014/15 and no amendments were required to the Local Code of Corporate Governance.

A copy of the Code is on our website at http://www.north-herts.gov.uk or can be obtained from the Customer Service Centre, NHDC, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City, Herts, SG6 3JF. This statement explains how NHDC has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2011 regulation 4(3) which requires all relevant bodies to prepare an annual governance statement.

2. The Purpose of the Governance Framework

The governance framework comprises the systems and processes, and culture and values, by which the authority is directed and controlled and its activities through which it accounts to, engages with and leads its communities. It enables the authority to monitor the achievement of its strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate services and value for money.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that 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 risks to the achievement of NHDC's policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood and potential impact of those risks being realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The governance framework has been in place at NHDC for the year ended 31 March 2015 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and statement of accounts.

3. The Key Elements of the Governance Framework

The key elements of the systems and processes that comprise the Council's governance arrangements are described in Table 2.

Assurances provided by the Council's internal audit function that is delivered by a Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) are a significant source of assurance.

The annual risk-based audit plan contributes to the review of the Council's key internal control systems, risk management processes and corporate governance arrangements. SIAS supports the design and effectiveness of the governance framework. Each internal audit is given an assurance level. The definition of each of the assurance levels are provided below:

Table 1 Shared Internal Audit Service – definition of assurance levels

Level of assurance	Definition
Full	There is a sound system of control designed to achieve the system objectives and manage the risks to achieving those objectives. No weaknesses have been identified
Substantial	Whilst there is a largely sound system of control, there are some minor weaknesses, which may put a limited number of the system objectives at risk.
Moderate	Whilst there is basically a sound system of control, there are some areas of weakness, which may put some of the system objectives at risk.
Limited	There are significant weaknesses in key control areas, which put the system objectives at risk.
No	Control is weak, leaving the system open to material error or abuse.

Table 2: KEY ELEMENTS OF THE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK – HOW WE MEET OUR COMMITMENT TO GOOD GOVERNANCE SET OUT IN OUR CODE.

Principle 1. Focus on the purpose of the Council and in outcomes for the community and create and implement a vision for North Hertfordshire.		
How we meet this principle	**Policies & Procedures in place**	**Assurance received and any issues identified**
The Sustainable Community Strategy was developed after extensive consultation with our partners and the public.

The Council's Priorities were revised for 2014/15. We publish our plans in the Priorities for the District and details of our performance are reported quarterly to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. | Sustainable Community Strategy

Council Vision & Priorities

Performance Management | The Council will review the impact of the removal of the statutory duty to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy.

Achievement of the Priorities for the District has been monitored throughout 2014/15 via the Council's Senior Management Team and a mid-year update and end of year report to Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The monitoring of delivery against the priorities reviews the Council's capacity to deliver agreed projects within the agreed cost, time and resources.

Analysis and reporting of performance for 2014/15 indicates we achieved most of our targets.(insert link to final O & S report) |
| The Council publishes external assessments of our performance.

A robust Corporate Business Planning programme is used to score identified projects against criteria including the Council's agreed policy, its priorities, the outcomes of public consultation, demonstration of continuous improvement and changing legislative need. | Signed audit opinion

Corporate Business Planning Timetable | |

The financial elements of our Corporate Business Planning Process are set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy which looks five years ahead to ensure the Council's commitment to the delivery of its Priorities.	Medium Term Financial Strategy	The Council continues to ensure the accounts are compliant to the Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice. Performance against its budget is monitored quarterly and through the Corporate Business Planning Process, and it ensures that the level of reserves it holds is sustainable over the medium term. The Medium Term Financial Strategy will continue to take account of the current economic climate and the forthcoming changes to Local Authority funding. The Finance Audit & Risk Committee and Cabinet reviews the Council's revenue, capital and treasury management activity on a quarterly basis. The Council's key financial systems are subject to an annual review by internal audit
The Council has a Treasury Management Strategy that is reviewed each year and monitored quarterly.	Treasury Management Strategy	Quarterly reviews ensure the Council has sound processes and controls over the Treasury function that minimise risks to the Council.

Principle 2: Work to achieve the agreed objectives within clearly defined Member and Officer roles.		
How we meet this principle	**Policies & Procedures in place**	**Assurance received and any issues identified**
The Council's Constitution includes a scheme of delegation and terms of reference for each of the Council's committees. Responsibilities are recorded to make clear how the executive and non-executive functions operate within the Council. The Constitution reflects the legislative arrangements for defining executive and non-executive functions.	Constitution	The Monitoring Officer has processes for review of legislative changes which feed into the annual review of the Constitution. Consultation meetings and other forms of communication between the Monitoring Officer and senior managers as appropriate ensures that managers can contribute to revisions of the scheme of delegation and terms of reference. The annual review of the Council's Constitution which includes all terms of reference and scheme of delegation is discussed with the Leader of the Council and opposition group leaders and is formally agreed by Council. The Monitoring Officer retains overall responsibility for monitoring the Constitution. The Constitution will be revised in 2015/16 to take into account recent legislative requirements. 🔺

The Scheme of Delegation defines the general power to act granted to the Chief Executive and Strategic Directors within the areas of their service responsibility.	Scheme of Delegation	
The Council has a statutory responsibility to have a Section 151 Officer and a Monitoring Officer. The Strategic Director of Finance, Policy and Governance is the Section 151 Officer (Chief Finance Officer (CFO). The Monitoring Officer is the Corporate Manager of Legal Services.	Organisation Structure Chart	The CFO has a duty to the Council's taxpayers to ensure that public money is being appropriately spent and managed. The CFO reports directly to the Chief Executive. The CFO ensures that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, is responsible for keeping proper financial records and accounts and for maintaining an effective system of internal control. The Council's financial management arrangements conform with the CIPFA Statement on the Role of the Chief Financial Officer in Local Government (2010). The Monitoring Officer acts as guardian of the Council's Constitution to ensure lawfulness, probity and fairness of Council decision making.
There is an agreed Officer and Member protocol.	Member/Officer Protocol	A constructive working relationship exists between elected Members and Officers
The Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee sets an agreed work programme for a number of Task and Finish Groups and reviews, which supplement scheduled meetings and ensure further Member scrutiny and analysis of how the Council deploys and utilises its resources. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee, having reviewed policy recommendations and completed task and finish reviews, can make recommendations to Cabinet which reflect their findings in order to further inform the decision making process.	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	The Overview & Scrutiny Committee publishes an annual report.

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Principle 3: Promotes values for the Council and demonstrates the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour		
How we meet this principle	**Policies & Procedures in place**	**Assurance received and any issues identified**
The Standards Committee promotes and maintains high standards of conduct	Standards Committee	The Standards Committee oversees the number and types of complaints dealt with through the local referrals process.
The Council operates Codes of Conduct for Members and Staff and maintain arrangements for reporting and investigating any allegations of misconduct	Member Code of Conduct Complaining about a Councillor	Regular records of advice on Member Code of Conduct issues are kept by the Monitoring Officer. Advice on Code-related issues is also given in the Members Information Service when necessary (a weekly briefing also produced on the intranet that gives Members regular updates on civic engagements, press releases and other items of interest or that need to be noted by Members etc). Ahead of the Full Council meeting in November when the Preferred options for the Local Plan was discussed, advice was provided as to interests and pre-determination. Given the high profile nature of this issue and the scrutiny being placed on it by the public, all Members should ensure they comply with their responsibilities under the Council's Code of Conduct
A Planning Code of Conduct is in place and is adhered to by Members who sit on the Planning Committee.		The Planning Code of Good Practice will be reviewed in 2015/16. ⚠
The Council maintains records of the personal interests of Members and senior staff and report those of Members on our website	Councillors' Declaration of Interests	Declaring interests under the Code of Conduct is a standing item on the agenda at every Council committee meeting and declarations are minuted by the clerk. A legal adviser attends all Council, Cabinet, Planning and Licensing Committee meetings to advise on Code and other issues where this is requested or otherwise considered appropriate. The Conflicts of Interest Policy will be reviewed in 2015/16 ⚠
Members and Officers comply with a Gifts		The Gifts & Hospitality Registers can be called in at any time by

How we meet this principle	Policies & Procedures in place	Assurance received and any issues identified
& Hospitality policy and the Registers are reviewed by the Strategic Directors.		the Monitoring Officer. ⚠ The Gifts & Hospitality policy is overdue for review.
The Council operates a "zero tolerance" approach to any type of fraud or corruption perpetrated against the Authority. The Council maintains robust arrangements for dealing with any issues that are discovered.	Anti Fraud & Corruption Policy	Having considered all the principles, the Council is satisfied that it has adopted a response that is appropriate for its fraud and corruption risks and commits to maintain its vigilance to tackle fraud. A Shared Anti Fraud Service will be operational from 1 April 2015. Other than benefit fraud against the Council there have been no known instances of fraud and corruption by Officers & Members in 2014/15.
The Council operates arrangements to enable staff to report inappropriate behaviour or conduct.	Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing)	No complaints have been made via the whistleblowing policy in 2014/15. The policy has been identified as requiring an update. ⚠
There is an internet page explaining how complaints can be made against Councillors. This can be done by either downloading a complaint form or making a complaint on line. A confidential Monitoring Officer email inbox continues to be available to receive complaints	complaining about a councillor	Any complaints received about Councillors in 2014/15?
The Council encourages feedback from service users whether good or bad.	Comments, Compliments and Complaints	Details of the 3 C's are reported to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Very few complaints are made to the Local Government Ombudsman each year. As at 2 April 2015, nine complaints had been made in 2014/15 and only one resulted in the payment of £100 compensation in respect of back dating a claim for housing benefit/ Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Principle 4.Take informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and risk		
How we meet this principle	Policies & Procedures in place	Assurance received and any issues identified

The Council makes all Authority and committee agendas, meeting papers and minutes available on the website.	Council & Democracy	A review of the publication of Delegated Executive Decisions and certain Non-Executive Decisions made by Officers, sometimes in consultation with Cabinet Portfolio Holders, and since 25 March 2015 have made these available on our website
The Council aims to comply with the Local Government Transparency Codes 2014 and 2015.	Open data	We are not fully complaint with the requirement to publish the data required by the Transparency Code. The relevant Services have been advised of the data that needs to be published and this will be monitored to ensure future compliance.
Underpinning the Council's financial management arrangements is a regulatory framework comprising Financial Regulations, Contract Procurement Rules, annual audits of key financial systems, audits of other systems undertaken on a risk-based basis and the role of the statutory Section 151 officer.	Financial Regulations Contract Procurement Rules	The Financial Regulations were reviewed and approved by Full Council on 12 February 2015. The Contract Procurement Rules were reviewed and approved by Full Council on 5 September 2013. These will be reviewed again in 2015/16 to ensure they reflect the latest legislation. The internal audits on the Council's key financial systems all provided a substantial level of assurance in 2014/15.
A register of Council contracts is published on the Council's website. In addition details of the Council's spend above £500 (excluding VAT) is published on a monthly basis.	Contracts Register Spend data	We commissioned the East of England LGA (EELGA) to undertake a review of our procurement and commissioning activities, and we will continue to implement the agreed recommendations from this in 2015/16.
The Council has a Risk and Opportunities Management Policy and Strategy In addition to the Risk Management Group	Risk & Opportunities Management Policy Risk & Opportunities Management Strategy	The Strategy and Policy were reviewed in 2014 and will be reviewed triennially unless there are significant changes that require the documents to be updated in the interim. An internal Officer group reviews the risk management framework. This is attended by the Council's risk management "champions" (Head of Finance, Performance & Asset Management and Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT). An internal audit on risk management in 2014/15 gave a Full* level of assurance.

The key risks that could threaten the delivery of services and the achievement of our Priorities are actively managed. The Monitoring Officer, after consulting with the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer, has statutory powers to report to Council or Cabinet in relation to any function, any proposal, decision or omission, that he or she considers would give rise to unlawfulness or any decision or omission that has given rise to maladministration. Such a report will have the effect of stopping the being implemented until the report has been considered. The Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee, having reviewed policy recommendations and completed task and finish reviews, can make recommendations to Cabinet which reflect their findings in order to further inform the decision making process. The public are encouraged to engage in the work of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Committee meetings dates, and agenda, are publicised. The Finance, Audit and Risk Committee provide on-going monitoring and review of financial management. Scrutiny is provided at Officer level through the work of the Council's internal	Finance Audit and Risk Committee Minutes Monitoring Officer role Overview & Scrutiny Committee Terms of reference for the Finance Audit and Risk Committee Annual report from the Shared Internal Audit Service	Monitoring is provided by the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee and if necessary referrals are made to Cabinet. An annual report is presented to Full Council. Further challenge is provided by Members through meetings with portfolio holders, comments received by consultation with area committees and Member workshops Quarterly monitoring meetings are held with the Head of Assurance from SIAS, the Council's Section 151 Officer and

audit function that is delivered by a Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS). The annual risk-based audit plan contributes to the review of the Council's key internal control systems, risk management processes and corporate governance arrangements. SIAS supports the design and effectiveness of the governance framework.	(update for 14/15)	Head of Finance, Performance & Asset Management to ensure a high standard of internal audit support is maintained. In addition there are regular meetings between the Audit Manager and Head of Finance, Performance & Asset Management. The audit plan was reviewed after six and nine months to identify any amendments needed to reflect changing priorities, emerging risks or resourcing changes. Amendments are made in the first six months of a financial year only if significant changes occur to one of these factors
Principle 5: Develop the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective		
How we meet this principle	**Policies & Procedures in place**	**Assurance received and any issues identified**
The Council's Appraisal Process not only identifies progress and performance, but also skills gaps. Any identified gaps are then addressed through an individual's personal development plan. Personal development and delivery against agreed personal objectives are monitored through agreed six monthly appraisal reviews for managers and on-going one to one discussions.		This process ensures that the Council continually has in post individuals equipped to carry out their functions with due regard to law, policy and regulation. The Council was reassessed for the Investors in People Standard in 2014 and will continue to address the recommendations from this in 2015/16. ⚠
The Council's People Strategy incorporates the Workforce Development Plan.	Meetings of Joint Staff Consultative Committee	The Joint Staff Consultative Committee formally reviews progress against the delivery of the Strategy. A refreshed Strategy is to be developed in 2015. ⚠
As part of the business planning process, each service plan includes learning and development needs linked to specific actions. This ensures that the skills sets required to deliver the key priorities and actions for the Council are identified and training and development planned and		The Council has a Top Risk relating to Workforce Planning which identifies the risks from the Council's ability to recruit & retain staff that have the skills and experience needed. The People Strategy will aim to address the identified risks.

provided The Council operates a vacancy management process which provides a corporate overview of vacancy management and to ensure compliance with proper recruitment practices The Council has a Corporate Equality Strategy to ensure we treat everyone fairly & equally. The Council is committed to equality of opportunity in employment and aims to have a workforce that is representative of the community that it serves The Council fully supports the development of Members and the budget for member training has been delegated to each of the political groups. Members are encouraged to have personal development programmes.	Workforce profile Equality Strategy	An internal audit on Vacancy Management provided a moderate* level of assurance. Following this audit, the Council will complete a review on vacancy control. This was discussed at a corporate Board Meeting in February 2015 and it was decided to keep some form of process and proposals will be agreed. The Council reports on a number of performance indicators to the Joint Staff Consultative Committee on the workforce profile of our staff. Following the election in May 2015, new Councillors will be provided with development opportunities to support them in their role.
Principle 6: Engage with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability		
How we meet this principle	**Policies & Procedures in place**	**Assurance received and any issues identified**
The Overview & Scrutiny Committee is, as are all our committees, held in public to take into account the views and needs of local people. The Scrutiny process allows councillors from all political parties to challenge Council policy and actions democratically and additionally considers the performance of statutory partners dealing with Crime and Disorder matters.	Overview & Scrutiny Committee Annual report (update with 14/15 report)	The Overview & Scrutiny Committee publishes an annual report as both evidence of its activities and its contribution to the Council's policy making process

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee has topic specific Task & Finish Groups. The chairmanship of these groups rotates between the political groups.. The Overview & Scrutiny Committee, having reviewed policy recommendations, can make representations to Cabinet which reflect their own findings and those of the communities the Council represents.		
The Council has a Corporate Business Planning process that includes an annual timetable of formal consultation events, ensuring our statutory, voluntary, community parish and town council, and business partners have the opportunity to comment on budget proposals (both investments and efficiencies) under consideration.	Corporate Business Planning Timetable	The timetable was reviewed and agreed by Cabinet in June 2014 and as it has been well developed and is robust will remain in place for forthcoming years. Any significant variations will be reported to Cabinet.
The Council has a Customer Service Strategy that aims to put people first.	Customer Service Strategy	An internal audit on the Customer Service Centre in 2014/15 provided a moderate* level of assurance. Agreed actions from this audit will be implemented in 2015/16 ⚠
The Council complies with legislation arising from the Freedom of Information Act. Proper control and security is exercised over personal data entrusted to the Council.	Freedom of Information overview Data Protection Statement	An internal audit on Data Protection and Freedom of Information gave a moderate* level of assurance. Work will be undertaken in 2015 to implement the recommendations from this audit. In particular, ensuring data sharing agreements are in place for all known data sharing arrangements. ⚠
The Council communicates the district vision and achievements against its priorities via a quarterly publication, 'Outlook' that is delivered to the homes of its residents. The 'Council Tax	Outlook Council Tax Leaflet	Views on readership and the look of Outlook are obtained when the District Wide Survey is undertaken.

Information' leaflet gives further information on our performance, expenditure and efficiencies and is posted on the Council's website. For the autumn of 2015, 'Outlook' will contain a Council review of the 2014/15 financial year summarising key achievements against the priorities with details of expenditure. Use of social media sites and a text alerts service have been introduced to widen the range of communication methods with local residents.		

*Definition of assurance levels given in Table 1

 Identified improvement action

4.   Review of Effectiveness

4.1   North Hertfordshire District 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 Senior Managers within the authority who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the governance environment, the Head of Assurance for SIAS' annual report and also by comments made by the external auditors and, where relevant, other review agencies and inspectorates.

4.2   Areas where the Council's Governance Framework can be improved have been identified in the third column of Table 2.   These have been included in the Improvement Action Plan in section 5.

4.3   The Senior Management Team, chaired by the Chief Executive, reviews the Council's governance framework and control environment and is responsible for the preparation of this Annual Governance Statement (AGS).

4.4   Each Head of Service and Corporate Manager is responsible for producing their own assurance statements and developing an improvement action plan to rectify any identified governance weaknesses within their service areas. The Chairman of the Finance, Audit & Risk Committee has prepared and signed an assurance statement for the Committee as part of the overall assurance framework supporting the AGS. The Monitoring Officer reviews all of these documents. The Finance, Audit & Risk Committee members have been informed of progress on producing this Annual Governance Statement and will review it and evaluate the robustness of the underlying assurance statements and evidence.

4.5   The Council reviews and acts on justified complaints made through it's Comments, Complaints and Compliments procedures. No cases of maladministration were found against the Council by the Local Government Ombudsman during 2014/15.

4.6   The Finance, Audit & Risk Committee has reviewed progress against the AGS 2013/14 action plan that was implemented in 2014/15. Some of the key areas of work that were completed include:

- **IT Disaster Recovery -** a full comparison of the NHDC Business Continuity Plan alongside the current IT Disaster Recovery capabilities was undertaken to ensure the same expectations/realities are reflected in both so that the true business service risks are clearly understood by all parties in the event of an incident occurring. In addition, IT Disaster Recovery has been greatly improved following the development of a mirror system in a nearby Council building.
- **Document Retention –** a Retention and Destruction Module has been installed on the Council's electronic filing system, I@W, to automatically delete personal information that is no longer required.
- **Member Training -**   a review of learning and development for Councillors was completed to ensure all Councillors, particularly new Councillors will be aware of the standards expected of them and their responsibility for any

Committees or roles to which they are appointed. This was supported by the provision of guidance for Councillors appointed to outside bodies.

- **BACS Processing –** an automated process was introduced to prevent fraudulent re-routing of funds**.**
- **Payroll –** a number of actions have been completed to provide assurance on the provision of service and ongoing contract management by the Council's external payroll provider. These required actions were identified as potentially posing significant governance issues in the AGS for 2013/14.

4.7   The contractor providing coin collection services for council car parks went into liquidation in November 2014, holding approximately £130,000 of council income at the time. The Council's Legal team are seeking to recover this sum and it is currently recorded as a debtor in the accounts. The full outcomes of the liquidation, and reasons for it are not currently known, but fraud, non-compliance with laws and regulations or uncorrected misstatements which would affect the contractor's financial statements have not been ruled out.

4.8   The Development Agreement with Hitchin Town Hall Ltd to deliver the new North Herts Museum and community facility at Hitchin Town Hall (recorded as a Top Risk) is important to the Council. The governance arrangement for this work which is primarily though the Project Board, including the Portfolio Holder, complies with the Council's project management framework. Regular information notes have been sent to Area Committees. In addition, there have been periodic reports to Overview & Scrutiny and Council to report on significant issues for decision where appropriate.

4.9   Ensuring the Council has an up to date Local Plan is identified as a Top Risk. The May 2015 general election and any changes to the National Planning Policy framework will need to be taken into account in its development.

4.10   Following an internal audit report on Non Domestic Rates avoidance that gave a moderate* level of assurance, the Council engaged an external consultant to review its policies and procedures.

5.   Significant Governance Issues

The progress that has been made in dealing with the governance issues that were identified in the 2013/14 Statement are highlighted in section 4.5 of this Statement.

Whilst generally satisfied with the effectiveness of corporate governance arrangements and the internal control environment, as part of continuing efforts to improve governance arrangements the following issues, as highlighted in the Statement, have been identified for improvement.

Key Improvement Area	Lead Officer	To be delivered by
The Constitution will be updated. (Source: assurance statement)	Corporate Manager of Legal Services	July 2015
Update the following policies • Gifts and Hospitality • Conflicts of Interest • Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) • Gifts and Hospitality • Planning Code of Good Practice (Source: Assurance Statement)	Corporate Manager of Legal Services	March 2016
Implement the agreed actions arising from the Investors in People reassessment (Source: External review)	Corporate Manager HR	January 2016
Refresh the Council's People Strategy which incorporates the Workforce Development Plan. (Source: Top Risk)	Corporate Manager HR	October 2015
Complete a review on vacancy control (Source: Internal audit report)	Corporate Manager HR	October 2015
Implement agreed actions from the internal on the Customer Service Centre (Source: Internal audit report)	Customer Service Manager	July 2015
Improve arrangements for Data Sharing with other organisations (Source: Internal audit report)	Head of Revenues , Benefits and IT	August 2015
Ensure compliance with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015 (Source: Assurance Statement)	Head of Revenues , Benefits and IT	
To review National Planning Policy Guidance on the National Planning Policy Framework and any other forthcoming guidance particularly after the General Election and make appropriate changes to any key policy documents (Source: Assurance Statement)	Head of Development & Building Control	March 2016
A new contract will be put in place for collecting coins from our car park machines. This will be closely monitored to ensure all performance measures are adhered to. (Source: Assurance Statement)	Head of Leisure & Environmental Services	May 2015
Update the Contract Procurement Rules to ensure they meet with current legislation.	Head of Finance, Performance & Asset Management	July 2015
To review and consider the implementation of any recommendations arising from the external review of our business rates policies and procedures. (Source: Assurance Statement)	Head of Revenues, Benefits and IT	April 2015
To implement the agreed recommendations from the external review of our procurement and commissioning activities (Source: External review)	Head of Finance, Performance & Asset Management	March 2016

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To complete the project for the North Hertfordshire Museum and Community Facility and open the new museum.	Strategic Director of Customer Services	Autumn 2015

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**

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Leader of the Council on behalf of   Chief Executive on behalf of

North Hertfordshire District Council   North Hertfordshire District Council