



# Report of the Director of Finance to the meeting of the Governance and Audit Committee to be held on 23 January 2020

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## Subject:

Annual Governance Statement 2018-19 Review

## Summary statement:

This report reviews progress on the significant governance concerns reported in the Council's Annual Governance Statement 2018-19

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## Portfolio:

Corporate

## Improvement Area:

Corporate

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## 1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to update members on the progress and improvements being made in addressing those significant governance concerns reported in the Council's Annual Governance Statement 2018-19.

## 2. Background and Process

2.1 The annual governance review is undertaken against the principles contained in the CIPFA/Solace framework – Delivering Good Governance in Local Government. The Council is required to consider the effectiveness of its current arrangements and:

- Assess the extent to which it complies with the principles and requirements of good governance
- Identify systems, processes and documentation that provide evidence of compliance
- Identify and ensure individuals and committees hold responsibility for governance arrangements and their continuing application and effectiveness
- Identify issues that have not been addressed adequately and any planned changes required in the future
- Prepare an action plan, identifying any individuals responsible for taking any changes forward

2.2 The Annual Governance Statement (AGS) was formally reviewed and approved by the Governance & Audit Committee at its meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019. The Committee subsequently authorised the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to sign the document on behalf of the Council for inclusion with the Statement of Accounts for 2018-19.

2.3 The Statement reported that the Governance and Audit Committee would be kept informed of progress in addressing weaknesses and areas of concern

## 3. Review and Conclusion

The Annual Governance Statement identified three continuing governance challenges,

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Children
- Ensuring an effective, integrated system of health and social care
- The adoption of the General Data Protection Regulations across the Council.

A comprehensive review of these governance issues has been undertaken and a detailed update is provided in Appendix 1. Council officers recognise the need for continuing effort to achieve improvements in the delivery and operation of their services.

## 4. Financial and resources appraisal

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

## 5. Risk Management

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The Council's risk management framework remains in place and, as previously reported, corporate risks are reviewed regularly, at quarterly intervals. There are no new risk management issues arising from this report.

## **6. Legal appraisal**

**6.1** The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require the Council to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the Council's governance framework including the system of internal control.

**6.2** The Council is required to test its governance arrangements against the principles contained in the CIPFA/Solace framework 'Delivering good governance in Local Government'.

**6.3** The CIPFA/Solace framework also requires the Council to provide an outline of the actions taken, or proposed, to deal with significant governance issues.

## **7. Other implications**

### **7.1 Equal and Diversity**

Risk management assists in ensuring barriers to the delivery of services are reduced which in turn supports the achievement of equality and diversity.

### **7.2 Greenhouse Gas Emission Impacts**

There are no impacts on gas emissions.

### **7.3 Sustainability Implications**

The Annual Governance Statement will examine the sustainability of the Council's activity and ensures that mechanisms are in place to deliver business continuity.

### **7.4 Community Safety Implications**

Community safety implications are considered when identifying strategic risks such as safeguarding.

### **7.5 Human Rights Act**

The Annual Governance Statement will take into account any Human Rights Act implications.

### **7.6. Trade Union**

There are no specific implications for the Trade Unions arising from the report.

### **7.7 Ward Implications**

In general the Annual Governance Statement does not focus on individual ward issues.

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## **7.8 Implications for Corporate Parenting**

None

## **7.9 Issues Arising from Privacy Impact Assessment**

None

## **8. Not for publication documents**

None.

## **9. Options**

Members may –

- Endorse the report
- Provide comment or instruction
- Bring forward any new governance concerns which should be reviewed, assessed or examined for the 2019-20 Annual Governance Statement.
- Require further information.

## **10. Recommendations**

That members –

- Review the information contained in this report and the progress made in addressing the significant governance challenges.
- Endorse the further actions planned.
- Alert officers and Members to any emerging governance concerns requiring review during the 2019-20 process.

## **11. Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2018-19: Mid Year Review, Improvement and Progress Report.

## **12. Background documents**

“Annual Governance Statement 2018-19” – report to Governance and Audit Committee 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019 – Director of Finance.

Governance Challenge – AGS 2018-19	Response reported in AGS 2018-19	Update at December 2019	Responder
Safeguarding Vulnerable Children	<p>Demand levels for social care continue to rise and there were 1,159 Looked After Children (31 March 2019). There has also been a significant rise in the number of children on child protection plans. This is putting pressure on social work delivery. Further recruitment of social workers is underway, but there is significant competition for experienced social workers and retention remains an issue which is being closely monitored. A regular workload report is shared with Children's Overview and Scrutiny and Bradford Children Safeguarding Board has continued to monitor the safeguarding arrangements. Following the October 2018 Ofsted inspection report an Improvement Board with an independent chair has been established and a detailed improvement plan has been shared with Ofsted. Regular Monitoring visits will happen every three months. The first such visit took place in March, focussing on the front door arrangements where some progress was noted. A second monitoring visit is scheduled for June</p>	<p>Bradford's third Ofsted Monitoring Visit took place on the 16 and 17 October 2019.</p> <p>The focus of the visit was around Children who are subject of a child protection plan, those subject to the Public Law Outline (PLO) process and children who are at the edge of care. The findings indicated that Children's Services are making progress in some areas, but with many areas that still need improvement. A key outcome Ofsted found was that changes have not happened quickly enough.</p> <p>The following improvements have been made:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The service has a new leadership team in post, it is developing a new staffing structure to help improve management oversight and align Social Care teams to work more closely with Early Help teams. The service is actively recruiting more staff to ease capacity concerns.</li> <li>➤ Social work caseloads are reducing because of additional capacity; and the oversight of court pre-proceedings has improved reducing the drift and delay that children had previously experienced. This hard work is recognised and shows the difference that this work and the teams involved are making to children's lives.</li> <li>➤ Dedicated recruitment campaign launched to encourage suitably qualified &amp; experienced workers</li> <li>➤ It is noted that there are still significant challenges that Children's Services need to overcome. In particular, there needs to be consistent improvement</li> </ul>	Irfan Alam

Governance Challenge – AGS 2018-19	Response reported in AGS 2018-19	Update at December 2019	Responder
		<p>in the quality of assessments together with management oversight on the quality of practice. Inspectors also noted social work capacity difficulties and issues with some partners not engaging in key child protection meetings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The next monitoring visit is scheduled for the end of February 2020 and will focus on Permanence and Disabled Children’s Services. The service is preparing for this visit, but recognises that this area of focus will prove challenging given the scope of Permanence and Disabled Children’s Services.</li> </ul> <p><u>Our Improvement Programme:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The programme approach provides a framework to ensure effective management and assurance of the Children’s Innovation and Improvement Programme</li> <li>➤ The Programme Team has been established to support and challenge through shared experience, advice and guidance for project delivery - <i>‘sit within approach not alongside’</i></li> <li>➤ This team ensure projects are clearly defined, scoped with a current state analysis; are evidence based, have clear plans, monitoring and reporting systems &amp; effective processes to track and manage risks and benefits/outcomes - <i>‘Theory of change model’</i> plus.</li> <li>➤ There are currently four programmes:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Prevention and Early Help</li> <li>➤ Social Work Practice</li> <li>➤ Workforce</li> <li>➤ Looked After Children / Leaving Care</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>In terms of practice, we have reviewed and changed the</p>	

Governance Challenge – AGS 2018-19	Response reported in AGS 2018-19	Update at December 2019	Responder
		<p>operation of the Integrated Front Door supported by a new Continuum of Need developed with partners. We have introduced social work decision making within the council's contact centre which has improved the quality of the referrals and the timeliness in which we have been able to deal with them appropriately through children's social care, early help, provision of advice or sign post to more appropriate services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Work is continuing with partners as to what constitutes an appropriate contact and to ensure that these progress through the system in order to achieve the best outcomes for children.</li> <li>➤ Earlier this year, there was a focussed piece of work to review a number of children who had been subject to a Child Protection Plan for 12 months or more. This work has led to a reduction in the average length of time children have been subject to a Child Protection Plan.</li> <li>➤ We recognise that we need to get better at supporting families more effectively during the child protection process. Going forward, a locality Head of Service and the Safeguarding Head of Service will undertake a review of any child who approaches 9 months of being subject to a Child Protection Plan.</li> <li>➤ For the safety of children and to ensure that they are having the right experience with appropriate outcomes, timely visits in line with our statutory requirement and Bradford's Practice Standards are essential.</li> <li>➤ Looked after Children in stable long term placements are visited every 12 weeks, with visits every 4 weeks expected for the rest of the Looked After Children population.</li> <li>➤ Child Protection cases are expected to be visited every 4 weeks. A new Practice Standard is being introduced to ensure that children are seen every 10 days or more frequently if this is required as part of their plan.</li> </ul>	

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤Bradford introduced more stretching targets on Child Protection visit timeliness as part of the Improvement work (from 28 days to 10 days) in order to increase their focus on timeliness.</li> <li>➤The volume of Child Protection visits has also increased but the introduction of the new Practice Standards for Child Protection visits has an initial drop in both volume and proportion.</li> <li>➤Bi-weekly data is now available for the service to monitor visits that are overdue and upcoming. Service Managers are now clearly sighted on this as an issue.</li> <li>➤Additional management oversight at the Front Door has meant that the percentage of contacts with a decision made in one working day has improved from the position in May where this was a challenge.</li> <li>➤October 2019 was the best month for performance for the percentage of contacts with a decision in one working day since the OFSTED judgement last year.</li> <li>➤To further support social workers manage the increase in demand, we have realigned the project teams to increase capacity within the West and South of the city, where demand is the highest.</li> <li>➤There was a higher volume of assessments to complete in September and October compared to the previous year, also a larger overall number were completed on time.</li> <li>➤Whilst the trend over the past 12 months has been an increase in case load per social worker, this is in line with the trends in numbers of looked after children outlined in the forecasting section of this report.</li> <li>➤The service now has access to bi-weekly data on caseloads which shows the number of workers who have above 26 and below 10 cases</li> </ul>	

<b>Governance Challenge – AGS 2018-19</b>	<b>Response reported in AGS 2018-19</b>	<b>Update at December 2019</b>	<b>Responder</b>
<p>Ensuring an effective, integrated system of health and social care</p>	<p>Work continues to take place to strengthen the governance arrangements within the Health and Social Care System. This includes approving the CQC Action Plan and the Memorandum of Understanding for the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Care Partnership. Council officers are engaged in the design of a new strategic partnership agreement that will be presented to the Executive in Spring 2019. The Section 75 agreement between the Council and NHS will be renewed (legal input has been agreed) during 2019. Work has started on the establishment of a formal Health and Social Care Economic Partnership Board. Consultants to support the set up will be identified by the end of December with the aim to have the new Board in place by summer 2020. Health and Wellbeing Board has agreed the development of Logic Models that summarise how the system will monitor the impact of its collective interventions – aligned to high level plans strategies. The Integrated Care Board (ICB) has agreed to use the current planning round to refocus investment in accordance with the shared Happy Healthy at Home plan. This will mean a greater focus on prevention, rather than investing equally in all portfolios and will require a shared approach to the</p>	<p>A review of the first 6 months functioning of the Strategic Partnering Agreement took place in October 2019. The two main changes to these arrangements which have taken place over the last year are: the Establishment of two assurance committees – Finance and Performance Committee and Quality and Safety Committee, which report to the ICB and enable a system view rather than a single organisational view. In addition the Executive Commissioning Board was dissolved with the transfer of its responsibilities to the ICB. The changes to the ECB were reported at the Health and Wellbeing Board and the F&amp;P and Q&amp;S committees were approved at ICB. The arrangements have worked satisfactorily and noted in various external reports from the CQC, LGA and NHS Confederation.</p> <p>This year there has been a review of the programmes the partners undertake together as a system. This review is now leading the reform and rationalisation of the programmes planned, and highlights opportunities for improvement in their completion. Amongst those improvements are some governance related changes to allow a clearer accountability role over programme delivery for the Health and Care Partnership Boards and the establishment of a leadership triumvirate model for each programme</p> <p>Reform of the Health and Wellbeing Board is underway to ensure the Board fully addresses it's role as senior strategic partnership for the District, maximising the impact of collective action by all the strategic partnerships – such as the Economic Partnership and Childrens Trust. These changes are expected to be agreed and implemented by May 2020</p>	<p>Lyn Sowray</p>

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	<p>engagement of regulatory bodies, along with a clear shared management of system risks. ICB has also agreed for work to be done to enhance system wide communication as part of the CQC Action Plan. The role of Executive Commissioning Board is being reviewed in the context of the emerging approach to partnership system commissioning intentions. Work is underway to develop options for strengthened system commissioning opportunities involving adult social care, children’s social care and public health commissioning functions with the Bradford CCGs.</p>		
<p>The adoption of the General Data Protection Regulations across the Council.</p>	<p>Following the implementation of the new data protection legislation (GDPR) in May 2018 work has continued to ensure that internal processes, procedures, data systems and documentation are GDPR compliant. Advice and guidance for staff has been published on Bradnet and mandatory eLearning on protecting information provided for all appropriate staff. Work is continuing in respect of monitoring GDPR compliance across all Departments of the Council and work continues with neighbouring authorities and other partners to share best practice.</p>	<p>The Council’s Information Assurance, Management and Governance framework has been refreshed and an action plan/work programme developed to allow for continued and regular monitoring of GDPR compliance through the Council’s Information Asset Owners (Directors and Assistant Directors). An Internal Audit is currently being undertaken, Council wide, to identify any outstanding areas of GDPR non compliance which will be added to the action plan/work programme.</p>	<p>Tracey Banfield</p>

