

Delivering Good Governance Improvement Plan Progress

The table below provides an overview of the action, progress to date and anticipated completion date of the action:

Action No.	Action	Progress
1	That the Council review and refresh its vision and strategy and develop a strong shared narrative to create a new sense of purpose focused on achieving the goals of its political leadership using data, insight and intelligence about the local, regional and national context to inform the vision and strategy.	<p>The South Kesteven Corporate Plan 2020-23 was approved at Full Council on 1 October 2020. The Corporate Plan articulates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The vision for South Kesteven - The five priorities for the Council - The key actions to deliver these priorities <p>The Corporate Plan is currently being refreshed, along with key performance indicators.</p>
2	That the senior officer leadership engage with councillors to translate that vision and strategy into a single coherent corporate delivery plan and programme to consolidate and focus on delivery of objectives.	<p>The key performance indicators and success criteria have been developed in liaison with the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Cabinet Members to ensure that they align with the delivery objectives of the Corporate Plan. These are continually under review.</p>
3	That the Council ensures that all officers and councillors understand their individual and shared roles and responsibilities, and each fulfils their proper functions in relation to policy formulation and decision making.	<p>A number of constitutional reviews have been undertaken since the commencement of the Delivering Good Governance Review.</p> <p>Further to the appointment of a new Deputy Chief Executive (Monitoring Officer) and Head of Democratic Services (Deputy Monitoring Officer), they recommended that a comprehensive review of the Constitution be undertaken. This is in the process of being carried out and it is anticipated that a new Constitution will be adopted by the Council at its Annual General Meeting on 26 May 2022. This will significantly improve the understanding of officers and councillors in relation to their role and function, both from an individual perspective but also in relation to shared roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>A significant improvement to the Constitution, agreed at Full Council on 27 January 2022, was a revised Responsibility for Functions section of the document, setting out clear decision-making responsibilities and delegations in relation to Full Council, Committees, Cabinet, individual Cabinet Members and officers.</p> <p>Subsequent training will take place for members and officers upon approval of the new Constitution along with training for all stakeholders specifically about roles and responsibility.</p>

4	The Council reviews and develops its capacity, capability and leadership to ensure that it has all the necessary skills, experience and mindset that supports high performance.	<p>A corporate restructure was approved at Full Council on 1 October 2020 which aligned staffing resources to the priorities of the Council set out in the Corporate Plan.</p> <p>A subsequent corporate restructure is currently being undertaken by the Chief Executive to ensure that staffing resources continue to be aligned with the priorities of the Corporate Plan. The annual appraisal process for staff will complement this, which also provides a direct link to the outcomes of the Corporate Plan and how individual officers contribute to their delivery.</p>
5	That the Council develops ‘the art of constructive challenge’ as a key element of its Organisational Development Strategy to ensure that it is the best it can be and is continuously learning, developing and improving.	<p>A new People Strategy was approved by Employment Committee on 19 January 2022. Chapter 2 of the People Strategy is around development and has a key aim to provide “A highly developed, highly trained and highly motivated workforce”.</p> <p>Annual appraisals, regular team meetings and individual one-to-ones are held by managers across the organisation.</p>
6	That work is undertaken to better understand the relationships between members and officers.	<p>A Member/Officer Protocol is set out in the Constitution which outlines how members and officers should work together and the standards of behaviour that are expected.</p> <p>The new Constitution will provide more clarity over specific roles and delegated powers to members and officers.</p> <p>The Council adopted the LGA model Councillor Code of Conduct at its meeting on 25 November 2021.</p> <p>The recent LGA Corporate Peer Challenge also identified the relationship between members and officers as an area that could be improved, which will be reflected in the associated action plan. The outcomes of the Delivering Good Governance review in relation to understanding the relationships between members and officers will be embedded as part of this latest external review.</p>
7	That a programme of leadership development be produced that delivers the collective political and officer leadership that promotes good governance, effective shared leadership and a constructive culture.	<p>The new People Strategy Action Plan includes a programme of leadership development, providing opportunities for members and officers to develop as leaders, with the Council clearly able to demonstrate investment in its staff and elected members.</p> <p>Opportunities such as the LGA Leadership Programme and LGA Away Days will continue to be made available to members.</p>
8	That the constitutional review be concluded promptly with a refreshed focus on good governance, leadership, culture and performance.	As reflected in action number 3.

9	That the Local Code of Governance and Annual Governance Statement be reviewed in detail to ensure that what is written (the words) and the evidence of what is done (custom and practice) are consistent.	The Chief Executive has completed and implemented the findings of a review of the Annual Government Statement to ensure consistency with custom and practice.
10	That the Monitoring Officer, with the support of all councillors and senior management, puts in place an end-to-end decision-making process that reflects the proper roles and responsibilities of members and officers and ensures that decisions are planned early and concluded effectively and fully reflect SKDC's refreshed vision and strategy and align with its new corporate delivery plan.	<p>The Council's report template includes a sign-off process, ensuring that key members and officers have early sight of reports and have the ability to make comments prior to signing them off for publication with agendas. The report template also makes it clear which corporate priority the respective item relates to.</p> <p>Development of new processes and procedures, including the development of a new report template and a revision of practices to ensure the effective management of the Cabinet Forward Plan and work programmes of other Committees, is in progress.</p>
11	The role, responsibilities and resources available to the Monitoring Officer should be reviewed and developed.	The role and responsibilities of the Monitoring Officer and Deputy Monitoring Officer have been reviewed as part of the corporate restructure, together with any necessary support resource.
12	A comprehensive 'good governance' focused training and development programme for all councillors and senior officers should be designed and delivered by the Monitoring Officer.	<p>A training and development programme for members is under constant review and development.</p> <p>Sessions on the new Councillor Code of Conduct are a recent example in relation to governance of training and development put in place to ensure that councillors are aware of their obligations.</p> <p>Mandatory training for specific Committees is regularly held for respective members to ensure that their decision-making is sound.</p> <p>Training will be delivered to all members and officers upon approval of the new Constitution.</p> <p>A Councillor Development Strategy and Councillor Development Programme, in line with the principles of the East Midlands Councillor Development Charter, are in the process of being developed.</p> <p>A comprehensive induction programme is in the process of being developed for newly elected members as part of the Council's all-out elections scheduled to be held in 2023.</p>

13	That the Council review and refresh its arrangements for stakeholder, partner and community engagement and invite the County Council to explore how their shared relationship and joint working can be improved.	<p>The onset of Covid-19 brought increased importance to the relationship of the Council with partners and community stakeholders, creating an improved context to further develop these relationships, including joint Chief Executive meetings between District Councils and the County Council.</p> <p>As a result of work undertaken during the pandemic, the Council now embraces strong relationships with the business and community sectors across the district and Lincolnshire.</p>
14	That the role and function of each of the Council's delivery organisations, the business case for each and the arrangements for holding them to account be reviewed and refreshed with a focus on commissioning them to deliver outcomes for SKDC and its communities.	<p>The Council's Companies Committee has undertaken a review of the companies to refresh the governance arrangements and develop consistent templates for delivery organisation business plans and to ensure outcomes are aligned with the needs of SKDC. This has resulted in a far greater degree of clarity as to the role and purpose of delivery organisations.</p> <p>There will be an ongoing review as part of the Companies Committee as to the outcomes being delivered by the various organisations within its scope.</p> <p>The Council is also continually reviewing its delivery models and as a result the Invest SK Ltd company will be dissolved on 1 April 2022 and the function will be carried out in-house.</p>
15	That the written Member/Officer Protocol is refreshed to reflect and support those relationships in practice.	The Member/Officer Protocol within the Constitution will be reviewed as part of the comprehensive review of the Constitution.
16	That the Council continues the work to review and refresh its performance, financial and risk management arrangements.	<p>As part of the roll out of the Corporate Plan 2020-23 and the new People Strategy, the Council is developing a 'golden thread' approach to performance with transparent, measurable success criteria.</p> <p>The Council has implemented an improved approach to financial and budget management and has updated its Corporate Risk Register accordingly, including its subsidiaries.</p>
17	That the Council keeps its processes for reporting on audit, local code of governance and annual governance review under review in order to ensure openness, transparency, accountability and accurate assessment of custom and practice across the Council.	This is an ongoing process, and the Council is keeping under regular review its processes to ensure greater openness, transparency and accountability.